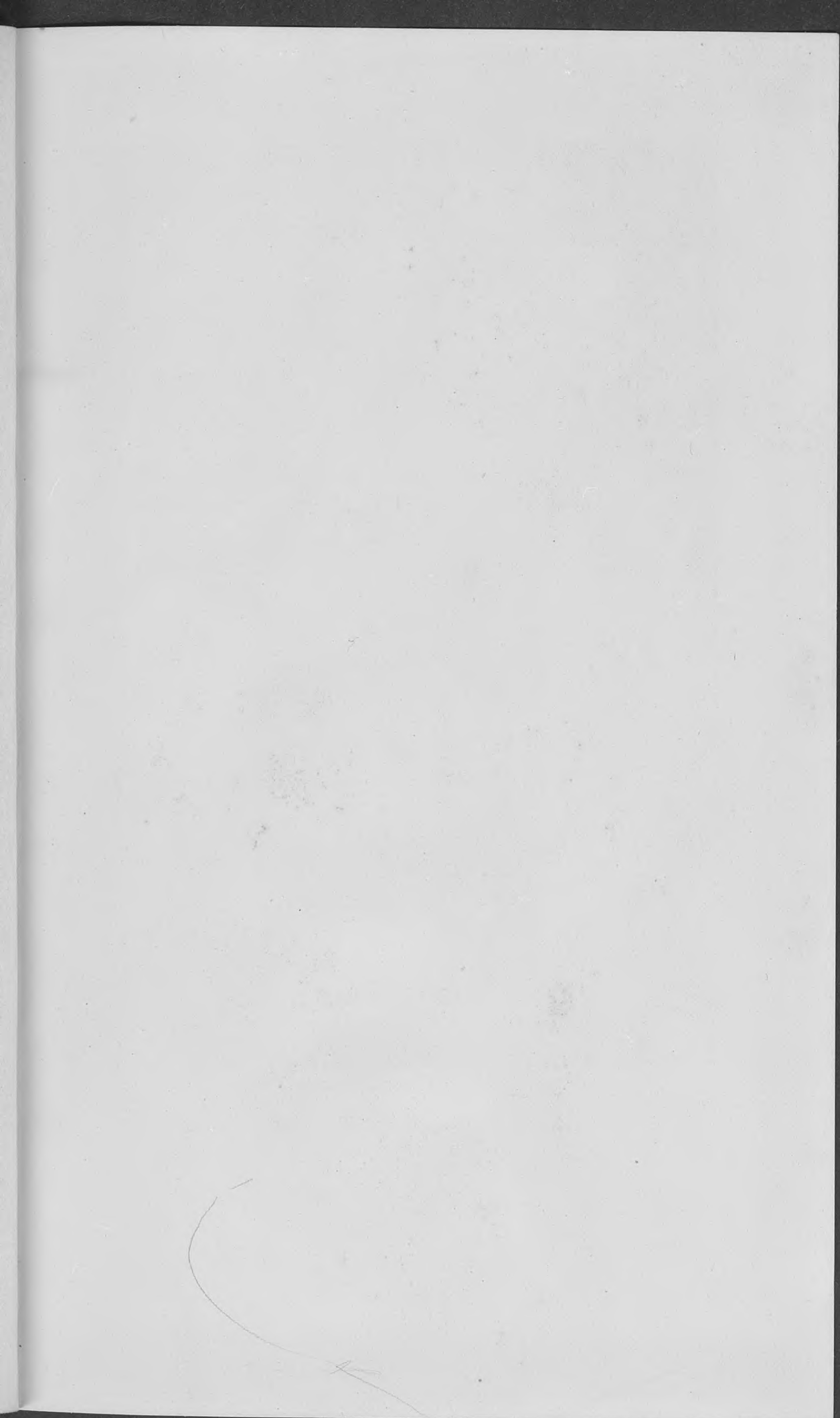
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Forgotten Shrines of Spain





THE MONKS' KITCHEN AT IRANZU IN NAVARRE

FORGOTTEN SHRINES OF SPAIN

BY

MILDRED STAPLEY BYNE

JOINT AUTHOR OF "SPANISH GARDENS AND PATIOS", ETC.

WITH A MAP AND 67 DOUBLETONES FROM
PHOTOGRAPHS BY ARTHUR BYNE



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To J. H. H.

CONGENIAL COMPANION ON CERTAIN TRIPS
TO REMOTE MONASTERIES

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FOREWORD

But let my due feet never fail
To walk the studious cloister pale

MILTON

WITHIN the last decade Spain has begun to claim the attention of travellers. It would seem that Americans and English, with that determination peculiar to the race, are coming, tardily it must be confessed, to tread the Iberian paths pointed out a century ago by Washington Irving and Richard Ford. Spain, for her part, has been forced to acknowledge herself invaded and to try to grasp the significance of it. No greater proof of the breaking down of the traditional Spanish exclusiveness could be cited than the forthcoming International Exposition for which Seville is making elaborate preparations.

Until the recent demand was created Spanish inns and railway service left much to be desired; in fact certain timid tourists fled back over the border after the first few days, forgetting that it is this very lack of progress (as we term it) that makes the land interesting. To be permitted to catch a glimpse of the Middle Ages, petrified, should be regarded as a compensation for indifferent inns. But now slow-changing Spain has fallen into line. Madrid is abundantly supplied with good hotels, a Ritz leading the list.

Provincial capitals with but few exceptions possess very tolerable hostelries, and the rural fondas or inns, if they have not undergone complete rebuilding, have at least remodelled themselves on modern lines. Roads are fairly well kept up. True, no new railroads have come into being, but on the other hand there is a complete system of interprovincial motor buses. One can at last get about even without a private car.

To understand the all-pervading note in Spanish civilization the visitor should keep in mind that the presence of Mohammedans on the soil for eight centuries was a condition unparallelled in any other European country. Through those long ages the race had to struggle hard, desperately, to evict the Moslem and save itself for Christianity. It is this unremitting crusade of eight hundred years that has imparted such intensity to the Faith and that gives a special meaning and pathos to the lives of the early saints and the shrines they founded.

Nor were these shrines religious centres only. They were at their inception a most practical factor in the progress of civilization; colonizing centres for some strip of land newly recovered from the Infidel. The abbot's mission was to start the incomer at tilling the soil and building shelters. During the great monastic age of Western Europe, Benedictines, Cluniacs, Cistercians and the still more austere Car-

thusians—each Order in turn—crossed from France and kept on establishing branches wherever new tracts of the Peninsula were won back from the dark-skinned invader.

Northern Spain having been made sure to the nation by Alfonso VI's conquest of Toledo in 1085, it is up in Old Castile that the most ancient houses are found. Beginning humbly, the abbot, with natural pride in his abbey, soon knew how to aggrandize it. In those days all artizans were artists; they had emotion even where they lacked technique; and as for the monks who trained and supervised the lay brothers, they lacked in neither. Thus was created a beautiful and sound building-tradition, and what is left to-day, either intact or ruined, is eloquent of it.

Mostly it is the early cloister that has survived; the silent quadrangle surrounded by Milton's "pale" arcaded walk with its appealingly quaint sculpture. Out in the open centre, fountain and flower beds bordered with myrtle; towards one corner an aged cypress; and all overshadowed by tall walls and a still taller belfry. From the purely pictorial standpoint alone one ought to be fond of these neglected old garths.

Besides the air of melancholy beauty which the gardened cloister offers, there is the indescribable amount of artistic treasure still hoarded by certain

communities. In the early Middle Ages the astoundingly popular pilgrimage to the tomb of St. James in Galicia brought the devout back and forth across Spain from all parts of Europe. The shrines where the Santiago pilgrims stopped to worship and rest received great revenue from this source and much of it was converted into art. And even when the pilgrimage days were over, when more revenue was handled by the bishops than by the abbots, certain specially venerated shrines continued to be the recipient of many costly gifts. No one will ever be able to compute the great proportion of New World wealth, Mexican silver and Peruvian gold, that was converted into ecclesiastical art for, and often literally by, the monks. To-day, in spite of what invading armies have destroyed and looted, in spite of the Liberal uprisings of the last century, when the enraged populace smashed and the canny politician purloined, there are still certain houses—Guadalupe is one—that are veritable museums of Christian art. Others again are and always were simple retreats whose inmates cared only for books. One of this type, La Rábida down on the sand dunes near the Rio Tinto, drew Christopher Columbus into its bosom. For this association alone it should be worth a visit from the Americans who sojourn in near-by Seville.

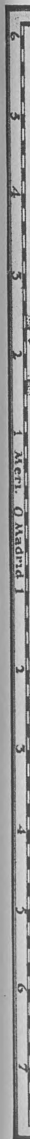
Foreword

In short a glimpse into the cloisters reveals something intensely Spanish; an eloquent page of national history. A trip to any one of them will put the visitor in touch with the real *España Incognita.* Moreover he will meet with rural folk as antique of type as the cloister inmates themselves, a kindly breed utterly apart from the urban. Railroads and the numerous strangers these bring swing wide of such sequestered nooks, so that whoever penetrates into this mediæval hinterland of Spain will have the no small satisfaction of passing out of the tourist and into the traveller rank.

M. S. B.

PASEO DE LA CASTELLANA, 19
MADRID

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FORGOTTEN SHRINES OF SPAIN

I

SANTO DOMINGO DE SILOS

BEST visited from Burgos, on the Paris-Madrid line. A motor bus has lately been put into service between Burgos and Salas de los Infantes, leaving at seven in the morning from the Plaza Prim, in front of the Post Office (*Correos*). At Cuevas de San Clemente passengers for Silos change to the diligence for Covarrubias, and at this place for the small cart or *tartana* that goes on to the monastery. Total distance, about thirty-seven or eight miles. There is talk of motor service direct to Silos in the near future, but one must not be credulous in matters pertaining to transportation in Spain. Private motors will find the road good, either from Burgos or coming north from Aranda de Duero, and the car can be left overnight in the monastery court.

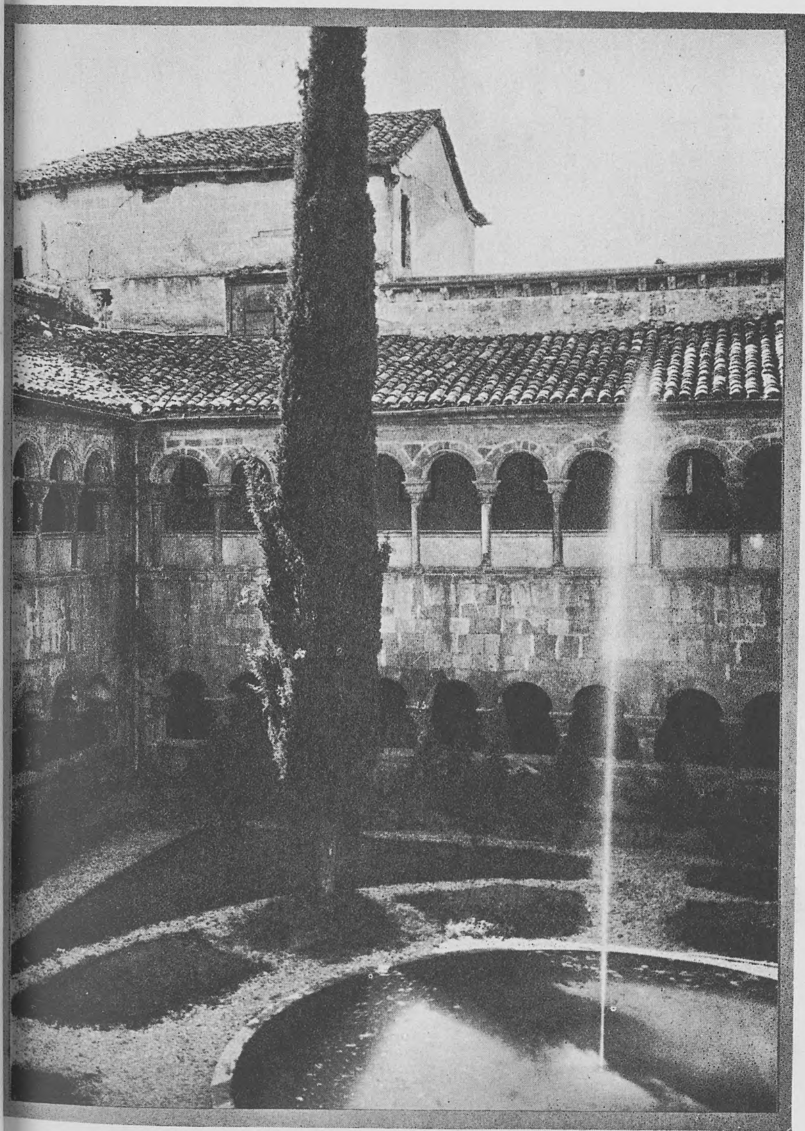
From Covarrubias an excursion can be made, mostly afoot, to the fine ruins of San Pedro de Arlanza, but let it be understood that the Covarrubias inn is embarrassingly primitive.

Silos possesses no inn at all. Women travellers never used to go there, and men were always comfortably lodged with the monks. Recently the enter-

prising pharmacist and his wife prepared two clean rooms over their *botica* for ladies; failing these, there is always Tomasa's house. It would not come amiss for the sex that cannot share conventual fare to take out from Burgos some good bread, coffee, tea, and fruit, as the resources of the hamlet are limited.

The motor bus for Salas referred to above has flourished for over a year, to everyone's surprise. In other parts of Spain we have seen these upstarts flaunt their modern speed for awhile in the face of the slow moving bullock carts, and then fail—not enough passengers to pay for the extortionately high gasoline. This may happen any day to the Salas motor that takes the occasional pilgrim part of the way to Santo Domingo de Silos; so if we describe here our first trip in the old coach and six, it is because there is no telling how soon it may again be the one and only means of transit. Personally, we hope such may be the case, though we would hardly dare to confess this backwardness either to the friars or to our friends in Burgos.

Paris, Bordeaux, Burgos—a hackneyed route, but it has the advantage of making direct for the heart of Old Castile. The more one knows of Spain the more one feels that Castile ought to be the first consideration, no matter from what angle Spanish civilization and culture are approached. Andalusia is seductive,



A CORNER OF THE CLOISTER GARTH AT SANTO DOMINGO DE SILOS



THE BANKS OF THE ARLANZÓN, BEFORE THE BURGOS MARKET
Where the farmers camp overnight awaiting the morning market

exotic; Catalonia is progressive, expansive; Castile is stationary, exclusive; and yet somehow, in the spiritual significance of the race, these first two regions are secondary, while Castile remains that imponderable something that has always dominated in Spanish thought.

Burgos, city of the Cid, was the first capital of Old Castile. The month for visiting it must not be chosen lightly, for the climate is inclement and we foreigners, deprived of the warm glow that comes from being born "Castilian to the core", do not accept the raw days as amiably as do the natives. In May, June, or September one ought to strike delightful weather, although even in September the night watchmen go muffled in blankets (*mantas*) and keep their brasiers burning brightly in the windy streets till morning.

To get information about a trip afield is generally impossible in a Spanish hotel or *fonda*, and the *Norte y Londres* is no exception. How to get to Santo Domingo de Silos? Only last year a young Englishman asked that same question—or was he a Frenchman? At any rate he must ultimately have got there for he spent five days away from the hotel.

The most glorious cloister in Europe, and the Burgos *fondista* knew it not!

We recalled the trouble we had the year before in getting to Cuellar. Cuellar had come to New York

in the shape of the magnificent tombs of its seignorial family, the Dukes of Albuquerque, which are in the Hispanic Society's museum, but we, alive and untombed, could not get to Cuellar. In Segovia they said it would be a ten hours' drive, but by taking the mail motor to Sepúlveda we could soon finish by diligence; once in Sepúlveda however, we learned that the rest and worst of the journey could not even be undertaken as the weather was bad. Following the mail-bags back to Segovia we took train to Olmedo whence, all assured us, a daily *coche* ran to Cuellar. The map said the thing was reasonable enough, but in Olmedo the daily *coche* turned out to be a fiction. The only starting-point for Cuellar, according to the Olmedanos, was Peñafiel on the Valladolid-Ariza Line. It happened miraculously that there was good train connection via Valladolid, so on we went. Only twenty-five kilometres separate Peñafiel with its stately castle from Cuellar with its castle, but nevertheless a shrewd contractor from Valladolid had represented to the Madrid government that his town, fifty-five kilometres from Cuellar was the only point within driving distance. Thus he got the mail contract at a handsome figure, for which trickery Peñafiel made common grief with us and invited us, through its leading citizens, to repair to the casino and curse out Spanish politics with them. We drank

vermouth and decided to let Cuellar go by till after the war when gasoline might be more plentiful and we could do the thing expeditiously. Had it been antebellum days the leading citizens would have regaled us, they said, with a dish of the famous Peñafiel jugged hare, but all the hares had been shot out to supply France with food, and now "a hare was as rare as widow's milk."

But back to Burgos and Silos. In any large city the best place to get information about outlying pueblos is at the *posadas* or inns on the outskirts where farmers put up when they come in to market. Accordingly we went over the river into the weavers' quarter where many an aged half-blind Silas Marner sits at his loom, and there we found a number of *posadas*. Most of them are in the Calle de la Merced. Diligences (*coches*), it appeared, went in all directions: one to Lerma, one to Salas de los Infantes, one to Santo Domingo de la Calzada, one to Covarrubias and thence to Silos. All these sallied forth daily, to say nothing of several shabby picturesque *coches* standing about which staid at home.

Having fixed the starting point and the time, seven A.M., we left the "Londres" early, buying our morning rolls on the street. (Would we had bought a week's supply of them, for Silos bread proved to be equal parts sand and flour). The morning was still

chilly and the carters camping down on the river bank had not yet unrolled themselves from their blankets. The sleepy young London boots or rather buttons had been sent ahead with luggage and full directions where he was to deposit it. Beside the Covarrubias coach we waited while other passengers swung their effects atop and took their seats, but *bottones* never appeared. By invoking the aid of two matutinal policemen and delaying the mail coach fifteen minutes, which the obliging driver said didn't matter at all, the missing valises were rescued from the top of a north-bound mail coach that was not to start till nine o'clock.

At last we galloped off, six horses strong, which the driver "swung 'andsome" over the bridge to pick up the mail, then back again. For awhile we kept beside the shady Arlanzón, but soon leaving it the September sun began to burn and the white dust was thick. Over tawny, treeless hills, through flitting flocks of partridges. It was the Burgos-Lerma-Aranda-Madrid highway over which Napoleon led his mighty hosts to the occupation of the capital in November 1808. Some of our passengers changed for Lerma, famous for its market day. (For Lerma was bound in 1679 the sprightly Baroness Aulnoy and had for fellow traveller the beautiful widowed young marchioness who was retiring to a convent, if we remember the

Baroness' Memoirs correctly, to escape her too numerous suitors). Covarrubias, not Lerma, was to be our stopping-place. There we remained two days, picking up the same coach and driver, and continuing to the spot where the Silos road points in from the main or Salas highway. This marked the second stage of our peregrination. From here on, shrunken in every way, for we were now the only occupants of a small *tartana* (two-wheeled canvas-topped cart), we skirted the edge of a wild ravine for about two hours. Before the ravine road was built, visitors to Silos had to write the abbot in advance, that he might send horses out to the highroad in order to accomplish this last leg of the journey.

Between Burgos and Covarrubias the only object of architectural pretensions is the ruined Renaissance palace at Saldañuela. Bare on the roadside, it stands without garden or approach of any sort, an abruptness peculiar to the Spanish mansion of the sixteenth century. Nobody has unearthed its history, but in the ball-room are carved reliefs of Philip II and his one-eyed favorite, the Princess Eboli (a Mendoza); and these portraits along with the popular name of the place—House of the Harlot—suggest a tale. The palace is now a farmhouse with a sorry confusion of implements and animals packed in its once brilliant salons.

Covarrubias proved well worth while not only for the treasures in its collegiate church but also for the chance to visit the ruins of the once great abbey of San Pedro de Arlanza, some five miles away. *Cuevas rubias*, reddish caves; and certainly nature indulged plentifully in these formations, as the walk to Arlanza revealed to us. What an important part Covarrubias played in early Reconquest history is set forth by Padre Serrano of Silos, in his *Fuentes para la Historia de Castilla*. Now it is a most decayed old town. When we arrived, the loiterers around the inn, spying us as *ingleses*, thrust forward a townsman claiming that he spoke English; so he did, *mas o menos*, always saying I thank you when he meant I think. Shy at first and hardly equal to what they expected of him, he expanded later and told us he had come back from New Mexico for a bride. They were to be married next week and glad would he be to leave that dead town and return to the bustling New World where he had taken up six hundred acres of government land.

"Some days I work out in the fields with my old companions, but just for fun. I refuse the three reals a day (fifteen cents) which the *dueño* pays them. I pay my Indians a dollar and a quarter a day out there in New Mexico."

Another inhabitant of Covarrubias with whom we spent several hours was the *médico*. This rather

oldish gentleman had recently married the young daughter of the inn now known as the *fonda del médico*. (The man of hygiene, however, has not felt the need of installing even the most elementary sanitary conveniences in his new abode). The médico is a violent republican, and at the casino where he invited us for coffee he waxed indignant, loudly indignant, over the Morocco question (among others).

"Is it just, señores," he harangued, "that Spain should appropriate millions of pesetas for highways and schools in Morocco when those same two elements of civilization are so sadly needed here in Spain? Hospitals and maternity houses too. Look at our infant mortality, *horrorosa!* On impoverished fare and in miserable hovels our women produce, and often in vain, a baby a year—the only harvest that never fails in Spain."

"Yet they seldom complain; they seem resigned to their poverty."

My banal reflection ignited him anew.

"Just the trouble! If they had not learned too well that stupefying Asiatic lesson of resignation they would know how to feel legitimate wants and would find means to gratify them! *Si, señores, si!*" Then his wrath suddenly died. A Spaniard simply cannot sustain such a burden. "Have you seen the fine Flemish triptych in our parish church?" he asked gently.

No praise would be too extravagant for the Covarrubias triptych, nor for the exquisite little painting of the Madonna that hangs in the sacristy. Of this we took a photograph, the first and only one ever made of it, and sent it to our good friend M. Saloman Reinach, the distinguished authority on Flemish primitives. He pronounced it to be an ancient, almost contemporaneous copy of a Van Eyck masterpiece that disappeared a century or more ago. Both these treasures, the triptych and the painting, being now published and thereby saved from the antiquaries, it must cause them to gnash their teeth in rage when they pass through the place. Besides the works of art in the church, Don Primitivo, the *cura*, keeps in his parsonage an amount of gold and silver altar furnishings—a jewelled custodia or monstrance, a cross, a chalice, a *porta paz*—treasure which, I am sure, would not be safe in one of our little towns, unless locked in a vault.

And this is what draws the lover of art to Spain; the whole land is a museum; hardly a pueblo but still holds some precious bit of painting or woodcarving or *orfevrerie* saved from the spoliation of the unfortunate centuries that have passed over the Peninsula. What incalculable riches it once harbored!

On resuming the journey, the second stage of it, one of the seats was taken by a buxom young woman

whose only luggage was a new-born puppy tenderly carried in a pretty basket. The sleeping *animalito* was admired by all the passengers, and one little girl was even allowed to hold it for half an hour. When the young woman reclaimed it, bared her breast and suckled it, we were the only ones who got a shock. The others took it as a matter of course. Her first child had just died, they explained, and she was suckling the puppy until she could go to Burgos and get a position in the foundling asylum there.

Bare scorched tableland traversed by a long white highroad glittering to its thinnest perspective, and in all its course one lonely abode, that of Peon No. 55 (who is paid four pesetas a day to keep ten miles of road and eleven children in good condition); then a secondary road skirting a deep ravine, and at last the vast pile of the monastery comes in sight. Walled-in, uncommunicative, silent, brooding over a handful of squalid huts, unresponsive to the coquettish appeal of the charming little green valley in which it stands. The Mataviejos, tributary of the Arlanza, though narrowing to a mere ribbon in other parts of its short course, behaves most generously here; for centuries it has kept the monks' kitchen-garden green and given them plenty of trout in season. But the green garden lies behind, out of sight. The monastery, when one finally pulls up before it, stands flush with

the highroad. No shrub nor blade of grass mitigates the sternness of the approach. Whatever Santo Domingo de Silos has of beauty is shut within.

If tradition be true it was an earlier community than Saint Dominic's that picked out the spot. Back in the sixth century, King Reccared, when he renounced Arianism and became the first Roman Catholic king of Spain, sent monks here to Christianize this far outpost of his realm; but the Moorish invasion and the general disorder that followed swept away their monastery. In 919 Fernán González, first Count of Castile (his sepulchre is in the Covarrubias church) restored the abbey, which had been dedicated to Saint Sebastian, and gave it feudal rights over many farms and villages; but by the middle of the eleventh century it must have been in a bad way again, for Dominic came from Burgos with the special mission of reclaiming it. Dominic was a Benedictine of the Abbey of San Millán de la Cogulla, in the then kingdom of Navarre. Having in some way offended his monarch the holy man was forced to flee, and sought refuge with the king of Castile at Burgos; whereat this latter, who was no less a personage than Ferdinand I of Asturias, Castile, and León, confided to him the rebuilding of Silos. Thither



OUR SECOND STAGE-COACH ON THE ROAD TO SILOS
With but three instead of four horses



THE COVARRUBIAS MADONNA
A copy of a lost Van Eyck

Dominic went, and glorified God and art by building the most beautiful Romanesque cloister in existence.

Of the monastery begun about 1041 by Saint Dominic and consecrated by his successor, Abbot Fortunio, in 1088 little remains but this cloister. All that it formerly gave access to—church, chapter-house, refectory, library—have either disappeared or are devoid of architectural treatment. One winces to think that the cloister too might have gone—that others perhaps as lovely did go.

Every old cloister can claim a poetic atmosphere, but few are as ancient as Silos and as notable artistically; and even fewer are still steadfast to their original destination—the only airing of men who have voluntarily shut out the world and reduced life to this narrow compass as an aid in realizing (prematurely, perhaps?) the Infinite. To-day certain old cloisters echo to hurried profane footsteps, like that of Barcelona Cathedral which has been converted into a public thoroughfare; or to merry young voices, like that of San Francisco in Palma, or of Santa Clara in Moguer, which have been converted into schools; or again to the morning song of housemaids, like that of Lupiana or San Benet de Bages which are now private homes. Still others are ruinous and deserted, their only inhabitants lizards by day and bats by night. But Silos echoes only to the tread of learned

Benedictines, black-robed and black-cowled, passing quickly into the church, or strolling in the fresh open quadrangle after poring over their yellowed parchments up in the muniment room. The Benedictines of Silos, it will be seen, proudly maintain the reputation for erudition which their order has always enjoyed.

For the brief spell of nearly half a century, brief in annals that cover nine, Saint Dominic's cloister too was left to the lizards and bats; that is, from the Spanish Act of *Exclaustración*, or Disestablishment of the Monasteries in 1835, until the similar French Act of 1880. It happened that by the time France grew intolerant of the Orders, Spain had relented and was inviting them back. Theophile Gautier justly observed in his *Voyage en Espagne*, that Spain without the monks lost much of its romanticism. Uncloistered French Benedictines from the Abbey of Ligugé, near Poitiers, came with their abbot and a prior from Solesmes to take up their abode in empty, abandoned Silos. In time Père Guépin, the Solesmes prior, succeeded to the abbatial chair and was the snowy-haired, gentle-mannered and very feeble old monk to whom the male members of our party did reverence that first day up in his little *recibidor;* while his prior, also one of the few surviving Frenchmen and hardly less aged, was able to join Padre Alfonso and the ladies of the party downstairs for coffee; and as for

Padre Alfonso, their young Spanish disciple, we had made his acquaintance the year before working in the *Archivo Histórico* of the Madrid National Library, and had gladly let him urge the trip to Silos.

"They tell me you have just come from France, madame," quavered the old prior. "How is it with France? They will not crush her?" His dim eyes brightened as we assured him of our country's sympathy for his in her hour of trial. "The friends of France are very welcome here, madame. Another cup?"

On my stopping Padre Alfonso from filling it to the brim, the old gentleman noticed the restraining gesture. "Silos coffee is not quite delicious, madame, not quite delicious, n'est-ce pas?"

"It is very good, mon père, but I tasted better two days ago in France."

"In France, in France," he repeated dreamily, "yes, many things are better in France, but," and he turned benignantly to the two young Spanish monks, Padres Timoteo and Alfonso, "the French cloister of Moissac cannot compare with yours of Silos."

To carry a Baedecker into the Silos cloister is almost sacrilege; its mathematical accuracy jars upon the enchanted visitor. "An arcade of sixty bays upheld by one hundred and thirty-eight columns arranged in sixty-four groups." It is not because the

slender columns number one hundred and thirty-eight that there is a poignant stillness under that shadowy arcade, nor because they are arranged in sixty-four groups that the spot has immortal charm. For one of our Western World it is a new experience to be shut off from his age and his kind; to look only within, not without. The cloister is a monument to the great social system of the Middle Ages, and that system was already outworn when our new hemisphere was brought to light. The place casts a spell; we scorn modernity.

Abbot Domingo lived to direct his ambitious undertaking for some thirty years or more. Dying in 1073 they buried him in his cloister, and though the body was later removed, his epitaph written by the monk Grimaldo on a capital near where he lay still remains. He saw the completion of the north and east galleries or walks, as well as part of the west, including the carving of the capitals and perhaps of the reliefs in the six corner piers comprised in this portion. The remaining caps and especially the reliefs of the fourth pier (The Annunciation and the Tree of Jesse) are from half to three-quarters of a century later in style and technique. The upper story of the cloister was added fully a hundred years after, and does not differ from the generality of twelfth century Cluniac work, but the lower, Santo Domingo's enterprise,

is one of the notable landmarks in the progress of Christian art in Western Europe.

Were they Orientals who fashioned these capitals with all the delicacy of manner and theme characteristic of Eastern ivories? And were they Orientals or Europeans schooled by Orientals who carved the archaically appealing personages of the Scriptural panels? The question has been much discussed in modern critical studies; ever since, in fact, they were recently made known outside the obscure valley of Silos. As a matter of course the French, always excepting the late Emile Bertaux, claimed the cloister *in toto;* our own distinguished investigator Kingsley Porter says it belongs to the great school of "pilgrim sculpture, the same on both sides of the Pyrenees, which mountains were not until the thirteenth century the fixed boundary between France and Spain." Certainly in the eleventh, when Santo Domingo was building his church and cloister, the Pyrenees offered no barrier to the thousands of pious folk who were flocking from the north of Europe to the shrine of Santiago, patron of Spain. Art and folklore came with them and they carried back as much as they brought, both materially and in the way of memories. By the time the pilgrimage to Santiago was in full swing the Mussulman carvers of Spain had produced marvels in ivory—coffrets,

crosses,—for the Christian cult, and these both directly and through the pilgrim flux must have had an influence on stone sculptures. Now, strangely late, Spain's part in the development of Western art is gaining recognition.

In a land where the French claim to have inspired all that is best in mediæval Spanish art (and where, incidentally, the stiff clerical party claims they inspired all that is worst in modern Spanish morals) it is of great historical importance that here on the larger and best part of the Silos cloister we find capitals dating from before Abbot Domingo's death in 1073 which are neither French work nor imitation of it. On the other hand they bear close analogy, as said, with Spanish ivories; moreover they are fraught, according to Padre Ramiro, with Eastern symbolism.

Each capital has its own expression, makes its own impression, and one lingers curious as to the message, as well as elated by the incomparable technique. Strange birds stand face to face, their sinuous necks intertwined to make a symmetrical design; feathered gazelles take the same decorative contortions. There are swans that symbolize the vices of life, white and alluring outside but black of flesh underneath; and lions that stand for strength and prudence in the struggle of life; and little nondescript *bichos* with their heads tucked under their wings, so to speak,

that meant death. Padre Ramiro, formerly a prosperous man of affairs with archæological as well as monastic leanings, who lately professed at Silos, showed us a cap on the west side whereon, by means of these emblems, the whole story of our mortal passage is concentrated. Above the necking are flowers, signifying birth; then face to face lions, signifying strong struggling manhood; surmounting them but with long necks drooping to encoil the lordly lions, the vicious swans that all too often triumph; crowning all is the supreme victor, the half-hidden mysterious creature that means death.

Now a biography of Santo Domingo written here in the monastery by one of his immediate disciples tells us that there were Mohammedan slaves in the monastery—that is, artizans captured by the victorious Christians and sent where building was in operation; further, that the abbot kept them busy on his edifice; and Padre Ramiro even affirms that he has found Arabic legends in praise of Allah that were surreptitiously introduced into the carvings. And not only were there Mohammedan craftsmen but also Mohammedan works of art in the monastery. One of them, an important ivory coffer, is now exhibited in the Burgos Museum. It bears the inscription "I was made in Medina Cuenca in 1026 by Mohammed Ben Zeyuan." Still in place in the

abbot's cell, happily, is a silver chalice made to his order, a typical piece of Eastern filigree. These facts considered, why indeed should Silos art be anything but Mohammedan in tendency? At any rate, why should it be French? Making the rounds of this prodigal display of carving, one suspects that Domingo asked his monarch to send him only such *Sarraceni*, or prisoners of war, as had magic fingers.

And thus day after day in that far-off eleventh century the Moors were working beautifully to ennoble a faith they abhorred, which embodied ideals that were distasteful to them, and which was making war on their own cherished creed not only here in Spain but also in distant Palestine. By night they were chained. Once a number of them managed to break strong shackles and escape, seeking refuge in the wild gorge of Yecla near-by; but the holy Dominic had a vision which led him next morning to the very cave where the miserable huddled wretches hoped to hide safe all day; they were overcome and brought back. It must have been this event that gave Saint Dominic his widespread reputation for power over the infidel. He had only to pray, there in his little cell at Silos, for the release of Spaniards languishing in Andalusian or African prisons, and straightway their chains fell from them and they walked out past the sleeping Moorish guards. The

convent church contains a great number of heavy iron shackles brought as votive offerings by Christians thus liberated. Whenever a little boy of Silos village is naughty and stubborn (*revoltoso*) and tries to shake away from a correcting mother, she declares to other mothers and not without pride, that not even the chains in Santo Domingo could hold him!

Of Moorish tradition again is the gayly painted wooden ceiling over the cloister. It appears, by the motifs, to be as late as the fourteenth century; what it then replaced was probably similar in decoration except for the Castilian heraldry and the naïve Gothic scenes of the chase, or the lady spinning, or another culling flowers. The original, if painted, would have shown geometric or floral decoration, not the figure. In these sacred precincts, and executed for the daily delectation of men who had renounced the sweet charms of domestic life, this ceiling reminds one forcibly of how greatly monachal tenets had been modified since the twelfth century, when Saint Bernard thundered against the rich, profane sculpture that had found its way into the houses of the order of Cluny. "Why," demanded the outraged reformer, "these soldiers who fight, these hunters who blow the horn for the chase, these forms of such fantastic design that the friars must be more occupied in deciphering them than in studying their breviaries?"

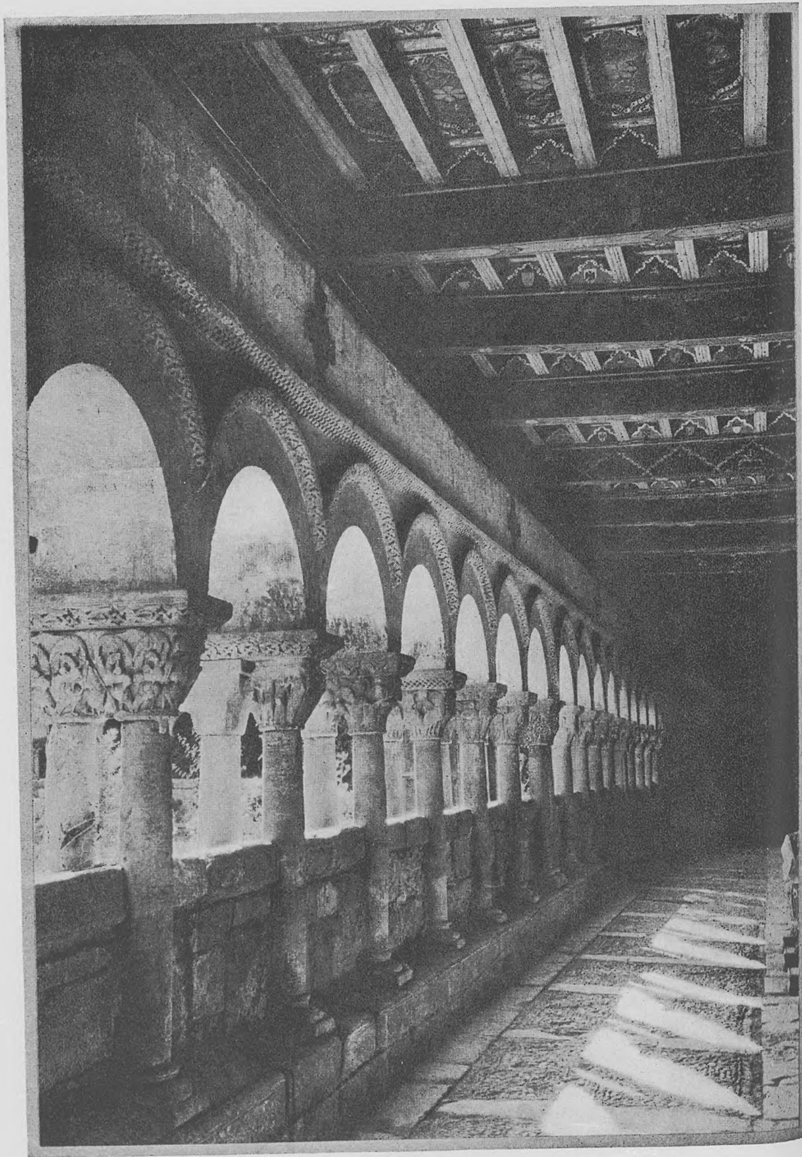
One rejoices inwardly, one even chuckles, to see how little the majority of monkish art patrons heeded that stern wail. It would have been the death-blow to religious art. The painter of the Silos ceiling was given full liberty of subject, so he considerately gave the cowled ones a chance, in the intervals of conning their breviaries, to imagine themselves in the beamed hall of some near-by nobleman's castle where Castilian costumes and customs had been freely depicted by him. These colorful bits of genre are a joyous intrusion; even Padre Ramiro, symbolically bent, would be able to find in them only sheer fancy, unreligious.

So much for that part of the decoration which it would be difficult to establish as entirely Christian; but what of the Scriptural reliefs on each corner pier of the cloister? Mr. Porter classifies them as "pilgrim Sculpture, the same on both sides of the Pyrenees"; but the late Emile Bertaux called them French for their rare artistic skill and placed them a century later than the capitals, which he admitted to be Saracenic. The sculptor, so he would have it, came direct from Toulouse and followed models he had already executed there but with the difference that he observed contemporaneous Spanish fashions in feminine apparel and introduced them into the sacred drama. Our own opinion is that the sculptor, whether born in Castile or merely sojourning there, observed



THE ROAD TO EMMAUS, CHRIST REPRESENTED WITH THE COCKLE SHELL OF THE SANTIAGO PILGRIMS

A corner pier in the cloister



THE CLOISTER WALK AND PAINTED BEAMED CEILING AT SILOS

more than details of dress; in short, that he was thoroughly impregnated with the pronounced Orientalism of the young Spanish Christian kingdom. The figures in The Road to Emmaus, and the technical perfection of the carving seem more akin to the art of Persia under the Sassanides than to that of France under the sway of Cluny. It must be that the brooding spirits of those luckless Saracen captives were lingering in the cloister, determined that, since they could not prevent the use of the human figure in art, it should be so conventionalized as not to mar by European realism a work they had stamped as Asiatic.

The remaining reliefs of the series represent the Incredulity of Thomas, the Descent from the Cross, The Holy Sepulchre, the Ascension, and the Pentecost. In each composition the figures are under a little arch repeating at small scale a bay of the cloister itself. This arch and other motives, not precisely invented here, spread from here into later figure sculpture in both Spain and France; surely some ivory or miniature supplied them.

One can picture this extraordinary early monument in the making, masked by scaffolding cut from the massive walnut trees of Silos, half or perhaps all of the busy artizans infidels, and the carvers working under the direction of a black-cowled Benedictine

pacing the galleries with his model, an ivory or a miniature, in hand. What an atelier was that!

So it was that Silos was built. Off the Pilgrim Road, yet drawing no few itinerant artists from it; receiving others from the mother house of Montecasino or perhaps even from Byzantium; profiting by the labor of skilled Moorish captives whose Arab art had been affected both in Andalusia and in Egypt by Byzantine and Syrian currents—referring to the miniatures made for the *Commentary on the Apocalypse*—compounded from all these contacts and directed by a zealous abbot, was erected the monastery of Silos. In that September of our first visit the precinct had a warm decadent stillness in spite of the frivolous *jet d'eau;* the soft tread of a dark-clad monk now and then added to the picture but set no sound-wavelet stirring. There was a contagion of antiquity, of Castilian moral severity, of loneliness, yet withal of sheer poetic loveliness in the spot. I knew it would not be my last visit.

Saint Dominic's biographer describes the church his master built as having three domes and these as being a most notable achievement. The statement is historically interesting, for it makes the Silos cupolas anterior to the famous and matchless Eastern group along the Duero River, in Salamanca, Zamora, and Toro. Dominic's ability to construct this difficult

and complicated feature is explained by his having carried on active correspondence with the illustrious Abbot Didier of Montecasino, the original home of the Benedictine order. Didier, then engaged in rebuilding this vast monastery, had brought architects to Italy from Constantinople, and it is suggested that he may have sent some of them to assist his brother of Burgos. But as the mosque of Cordova had been supplied by Mohammedan architects with a dome a whole century before Dominic began his career, it may not have been necessary to look so far afield as Byzantium for an expert in this purely Oriental feature.

But of what avail all this conjecture? Santo Domingo's domed structure is no more. Either it was not kept in repair and began to fall, or impious hands deliberately demolished it during the eighteenth-century passion for reviving the classic style. Don Ventura Rodriguez, arch spoiler of early Spanish ecclesiastic architecture, favorite of wrong-minded unchristian bishops and abbots, was called upon in 1750 to put in its place a bare, frigid classic church. A lamentable substitute out of all harmony with the fervent cloister, the humble hamlet, the sylvan valley. Even the most artless layman must be tristful at the intrusion, must regret the sincere and truly Christian fabric that was removed. And yet—when the *padres*

de coro file in from the cloister to sing Mass in all the majesty of mitre and rich vestment, one suspects that even those among them of archæological bent probably feel that this spacious eighteenth-century fabric is more worthy of their effort. "Divine service being celebrated in this church with exactitude and splendor," says Père Guépin's little *folleto*, "following the tradition of Solesmes which was always a noted school of liturgy and Gregorian chant," both Mass and vespers are grand moments. Twice a day in this remote squalid little hamlet of Silos that cannot provide more than a dozen auditors at a time, a magnificent organ swells under no mean touch to the rich volume of well trained voices. Here in very truth does the

> . . . . . . .pealing organ flow
> To the full-voiced choir below
> In service high and anthems clear

Until a few years ago the journey to Silos would have been useless so far as a woman traveller is concerned. Strictest papal *clausura* was observed. But one day when two dauntless "Yankee ladies" (*señoras yanquis*, as Padre Alfonso designated them) unaware of the *clausura*, came on bicycles all the way from Burgos only to be turned off at the abbey door, the compassionate abbot (he was a Frenchman,

it will be remembered) sent two of his monks to Rome to implore sanction for the admission of the forbidden sex. This granted, the next step, as there was no inn of any sort in Silos, was to have the young wife of a monastery gardener fit up a room of her house with monastery odds and ends in order to lodge any valiant ladies who might be willing to travel so far for a sight of the famous cloister. Men, of course, have always been hospitably lodged in the convent.

How inviting it all sounded when the gentle-faced Padre Alfonso told us in Madrid of their thoughtfulness. He had never seen Tomasa's guest room; and even if he had what would it have mattered to him, dear rapt saint and pueblo-born, that it was over the pig-sty, and that the many knot-holes of the board floor admitted grunts and smells in large measure; or that the little woman Tomasa whom they had chosen for the honor of receiving Silos' guests did not know how to cook, chiefly for the reason that there was nothing in Silos to cook. (Let Tomasa's future guests and the pharmacist's also be warned that a bag of food is the most useful luggage they can take out from Burgos). Still, for a night or two it would have been tolerable, and Tomasa herself was the embodiment of solicitude and courtesy, like all her class. Merely to encounter that quality in those who

serve is, for one from a mannerless land, almost as refreshing as food and drink.

Ladies are not allowed to remain long in the cloister but we had the privilege of returning to it several times; for whenever a visitor came out from Burgos, and this was the favorite month for visitors, Padre Alfonso was kind enough to send for me to join the party. Thus there was many a peep at the sculpture and many a visit to the Saint's little cell where a few old books and the few remains of the ancient church plate are kept, along with his miracle-working *baculo* or crosier. Ever since the twelfth century this has had great efficacy in childbirth, so rosy-faced young Padre Timoteo told me, and has been carried often to the royal palace at Madrid to the great comfort of the various queens concerned. It was through the prayers of a noble Spanish lady addressed to Dominic in 1170 and granted in full, that the long-dead patron saint of Silos added this power to that of freeing Christian captives from the Moors. Abbot Guépin, who prepared the interesting little booklet on Monastic Life in Silos thus relates it: "When the Blessed Juana de Aza obtained grace to give birth to the holy Domingo de Guzman, who became the founder of the Order of Mendicant Preachers, or Dominicans, Santo Domingo de Silos acquired new claim to the devotion and confidence

of the faithful: he became the advocate for successful childbirth—*el abogado de los felices partos*. As such his aid is invoked by pregnant women who, in their piety, wear belts which have been touched either to the Saint's bones or to his miracle-working crozier."

Besides entering frequently the restricted part of the abbey I was invited to use at any time the little reception room outside the *clausura* limit. Here books were brought down from the library and I could work at ease. Any day after lunch on passing in, the group congregated at the portal was a truly mediæval sight. The halt, the lame, the blind, the merely old and poor, awaiting the distribution of food. Just such characters as Murillo painted in his *Saint Giving Alms*, now in the museum of Seville; but here in the Silos composition it is no mitred bishop who plays almoner, his rich robes spun heavy with gold in colorful contrast to the rags of the beggars. No, the lay brother who serves as porter and almoner at Silos is just one of themselves (*uno de nosotros*), a poor lad of the pueblo with a face very like their own and a cassock of humblest homespun; no jewelled and enamelled crosier does he wield, but a stout wooden ladle with which he scoops his big copper pot vigorously, till every outstretched plate is filled.

That one who was enduring a whole week of Tomasa's hospitality should enjoy these extra privileges at the monastery seemed only just. The first day when I asked her what she was going to give us to eat it was the usual *whatever the señorita wishes;* but it turned out that nothing could be procured in the hamlet but potatoes, onions, a tiny morsel of ham, and eggs. Not bad, if only they had been palatably prepared, and if one had not the prospect of eating them twice a day for seven days. I had brought tea, but no tea-pot, and to serve as such Tomasa could furnish only the wide-necked tin jug in which she boiled our eggs. As it was guiltless of a lid the water was full of smoke and ashes, for Tomasa's cooking-range was the open hearth piled with smouldering straw, and the bellows that started the flame was Tomasa herself lying flat on the floor and blowing her cheeks out to the bursting point. I suggested that she should go daily to the convent and ask them to sell us a pint of cow's milk, but this she advised us to avoid. When her little five-year-old was failing the monks sent him some and it killed him out of hand. It was too rich for the human stomach, she said; only calves and *frailes* could stand it. Goat's milk, she assured me, was much better. Unafraid of the risk we insisted and found the *frailes* willing to sell not only milk but delicious honey

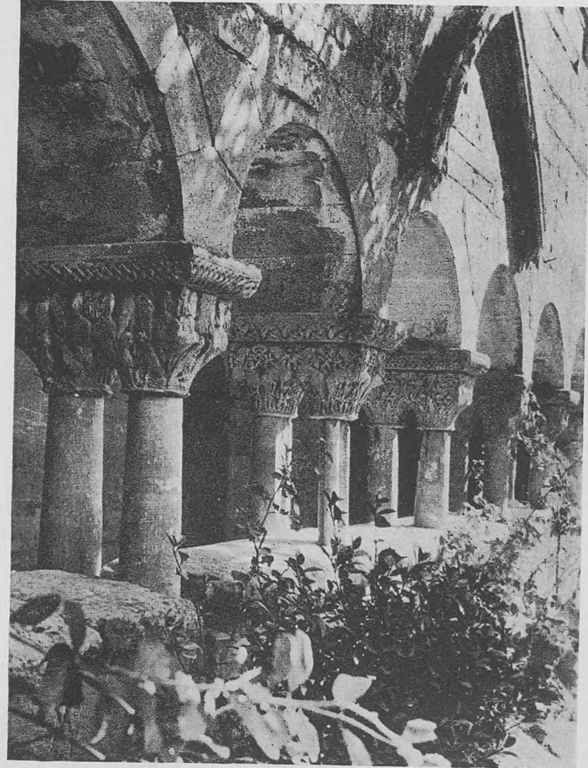
(of which they had marketed three thousand pesetas' worth that year) and a bottle of good Silos wine (*vino rancio*). This helped somewhat; and after all, Tomasa and her pigs and her abundant good will and her enviable good manners would be preferable any day to the average lodgings encountered in some small western town where, more likely than not, the cooking is no better though the variety of food may be greater, where the inn-keeper is surly and rude, and where there is no compensation in the shape of an eleventh-century cloister.

Meanwhile our male companions lodged in the abbey with the monks were faring better. Did not Saint Benedict, founder of the Order, enjoin it "to receive whoever might come to the monastery (*Montecasino*) as if he were Christ in person?" What I chiefly envied them was the opportunity to witness a kind of life and intercourse that hardly seems to belong to this day and generation. Their first meal after entering was at midday. A gong sounded. Out of their cells issued those mysterious black-robed figures and proceeded silently to the ante-room of the refectory. There too congregated the novitiates. On entering each bowed to the prior, but without a word, and passed over to the lavabo at the left of the refectory door. When the strangers entered, the old French prior asked them if they were

Catholics. "No? Then have the kindness to wash your hands in the basin to the right, that on the left being reserved for those of the faith." (The compensation for being thus discriminated against was a clean towel).

Hand-washing over, they filed in to the long table (no cloth), each man standing while the prior (the abbot being nearly ninety no longer came down to meals) said a prayer. Then they sat and each one drew forth from a shelf underneath the table-top his tin plate, knife, and fork. Lay brothers brought in the big *fuentes de guisado* (dishes of stew), and set them down, each monk serving himself and passing it along, except at that end of the table where sat the few survivors of 1880, the aged Frenchmen; there one of the younger, the Spanish, generation rose and served them. The meal was simple and abundant, the wine good. There was no conversation, but, as they ate, a brother read the day's correspondence from the pulpit. That day a letter had just arrived from a Silos monk in Mexico detailing the outrages of the revolutionists against his convent and the persecution of the village priest (the spiritual salvation of Mexico being the self-assumed burden of Silos).

The meal ended, all polished their tin plates with a bit of bread and set them back on the lower shelf.

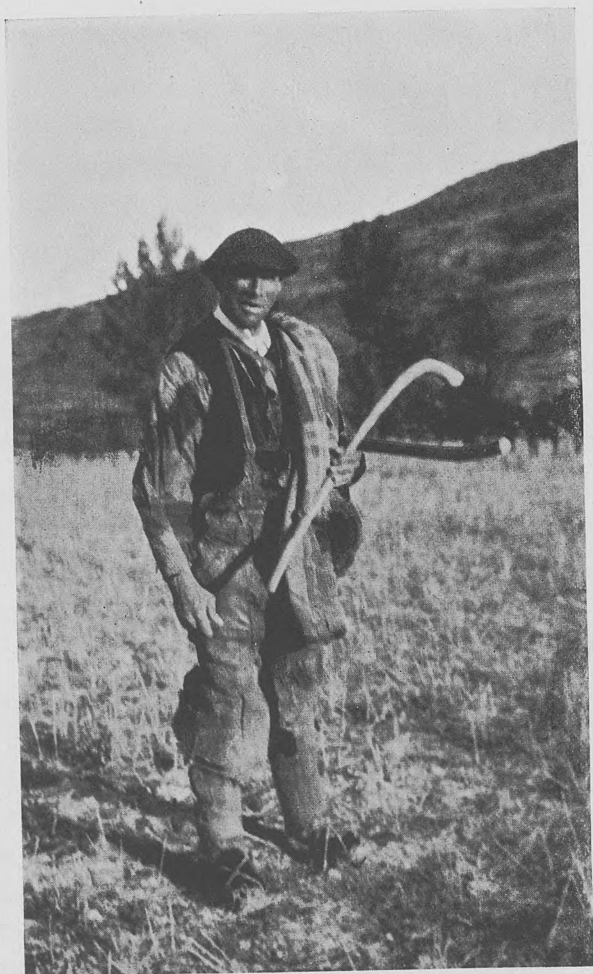


THE IVORY-LIKE CAPITALS ON THE OLDEST SIDES OF THE CLOISTER



A PAIR OF THE ORIENTAL CAPITALS CUT FROM A SINGLE BLOCK OF STONE

SILOS



THE SILOS SHEPHERD WHO GUIDED US TO THE GORGE OF YECLA

My narrator is unable to say whether liquid cleaning followed. As silently as they entered all left and repaired directly to their cells. Coffee not being part of the menu, an exception was made for the guests, who were invited to partake of it up in the father abbot's *despacho*. This venerable gentleman, Père Guépin, was the monk who in 1880 came from Solesmes to be prior to the group from Ligugé.

What a picture the aged abbot made for unaccustomed eyes from a land where his type and the reverence it evokes are unknown; seated in his *frailero*, snowy-haired beneath his green velvet cap of office, and with a large silver crucifix on his breast, he indicated the place of honor beside him for one of the original French group, who though only a little less aged, helped the trembling hand to lift the cup. A young Spanish monk poured coffee, another carried it to the old gentleman, and none approached or retired without dropping on one knee and kissing his silver crucifix. Asking his visitors about the great world outside, about the war, he told them sorrowfully that his old home, Solesmes, in whose monastery of St. Pierre the Benedictine rule had been newly interpreted and stiffened, was in the enemy's hands; their sympathy soothed him. When the tin coffee pot was drained to the last drop the young Spaniard in charge of it signalled them all to withdraw. The old

French exile was left alone with the daring doves that fluttered down to his one window, while the strangers carried away a picture to be treasured of reverence and affection rare among men of this hurried twentieth century.

It was this Père Guépin, second abbot since the restoration of Silos, who prepared the pamphlet already referred to—*La Vida Monástica en la Abadía de Santo Domingo de Silos*—a sort of prospectus sent to parents who inquire about the Novitiates' School. To the uninitiated it is a revelation of the seriousness of the cloister as a career in Spain:

Benedictines are the monks of Silos; but although the name is synonymous with *savant* it must not frighten away from Silos cloister one who, even not richly endowed, might find in it peace and sanctity; for the Benedictine is first and foremost a monk: that is to say, a man who has resolved to break with the world and live in the solitude of the cloister in intimate communion with God, in penitential exercises and introspection. His first duty, his chief occupation, his greatest happiness, must be the daily and solemn celebration of Divine service, this being the highest expression of the contemplative life. To this act of Divine praise, to this work of God par excellence, this Opus Dei as Saint Benedict called it, all else in a Benedictine abbey must be subordinate. The man who does not find pleasure in these holy practices, who does not consider it an occupation most exalted, most useful, and most fruitful in celestial benefits both for his own soul and his neighbor's,

is bound to admit that he has not the true Benedictine spirit. In Silos the Divine offices, including the conventual Mass which is sung daily, take up five hours a day, and on Sundays and Saints' Days even more. High Mass and vespers are always chanted; the other services are either slowly intoned or sung, according to the solemnity of the day. Following the tradition of Solesmes, which always was and is a renowned school of liturgy and Gregorian music, the *padres de coro* (ordained) in Silos, to-day numbering some forty, try to give to these ceremonies all the ritual splendor that their modest resources permit. Matins begin at four in the morning; at eight at night the last function is finished; and between these hours the monk's day wears on laborious and full of religious severities, but full also of compensation. Besides assisting at Divine office the monk must apply himself to mental prayer and must not neglect in private any of those practices appropriate to Catholic piety, such as the Rosary, frequent partaking of the Holy Sacrament, scrupulous examination of conscience, the Via-Crucis, etc.

Completely separated from the world, the Benedictine must look upon his monastery as the place of his retirement until death. It is true that he is not obliged to observe the strict clausura that nuns observe but his outings and his journeys must be rare and never for mere recreation and distraction. Above all, the separation from his family must be complete. This willingness to accept the renunciation of all communication with one's parents is the cornerstone of the religious vocation. *He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me*, said Our

Lord. The monk prays for his relatives and aids them from afar with all the spiritual benefits to which his profession lends itself, but he knows that he must set them aside, see them hardly ever, and in case he does see them, must force himself to subordinate all affection of flesh and blood to God, to the Church, and to his Order.

Out on the hill back of the monastery where grow the hugest walnut trees ever seen, and where the music of the monks' organ floats up faintly, there came a dreamy-looking, velvet-clad peasant boy of Silos to sit beside me and ask me almost with his first breath to pay his way out to North America. He was the third young Spaniard who had made that same request within as many months.

"It is this way with me," he explained. "I wish to be a priest and to bring the whole world, or rather that unfortunate part of it that has erred, back to the true faith. So I would consent to any employment until I could finish my studies and be ordained."

"Then you are already partly prepared?"

"*Si, señora;* I have spent three years in a free seminary in France and one year in Italy. But the war came, and my father was unable to pay for my studies here in Spain. I applied at the monastery for help but they are interested only in making monks, not priests. And even if I wished to be a monk—well,

Spanish monasteries are full of poor humble country boys like myself. What they prefer to receive are rich novitiates that bring money into the convent, like the Bilbaino, down there," and he indicated the great edifice below the hill. "No, I must be a priest; and if I can't get out of the country before next January they will call me up for military service, and that will delay the salvation of the world. You will therefore help me at once, will you not, señora?"

It looked so simple to him, poor boy, and so complicated to me. Not a word of English did he speak, but his seminary reports, which he carried about in his vest pocket, showed him to be high in French and Latin, religious history, and certain more barren branches of learning. Not a practical idea had he in his head. His notions of the world were a bit askew. He imagined it to be groaning aloud for a saviour, whereas I was sure it was as ready as ever to turn its back on one and go on content in its own wicked human way. His eyes flashed as he told me how those of his faith were being persecuted and had always been persecuted for no greater crime than being the only true Christians. There was that holy angel *María Estuardo*, whom he hoped to see canonized before he died, martyred for her faith by the hateful heretic *Isabel*, Queen of England. There was that prince of letters, Shakespeare, forced by that same

perverted Protestant queen to deny his religion or lose his head—

"So Shakespeare was really a Catholic?" I asked. "I never read that myself—"

"We Catholics," he assured me with great superiority, "get only the truths of history. By having our reading carefully selected for us we are saved those pernicious falsehoods which warp the minds of non-Catholics."

Poor young Miguel! *Señor Don* Miguel Barrio as he signed his letters to me, mindful of his Castilian dignity. I tried to place him as Spanish teacher in a Catholic school in the West, though it looked like an unwise proceeding to add one more creature unprepared for the harsh battle to the already large number in our land. But before the arrangements were completed the unfeeling government gripped him and sent him to the barracks and thence to Morocco. Meanwhile the saving of our souls will not be overlooked by Spanish religious communities. To judge from the number of branch establishments each Order can proudly point to on its map of the United States, the work is being thoroughly done without Miguel's coöperation.

He and his peasant father and mother, Tomasa and her husband and the child who had not been killed by rich milk, and the village school-mistress, and the

pharmacist whose beautiful Talavera medicine jars I used to admire daily, all came to see us off the morning we started back for Burgos. The *coche* left from in front of the monastery gate but we had said our *adios* there the evening before, and the doors of the venerable pile remained solemnly shut under their legend *Beati sunt qui in Domine moriuntur.*

"Perhaps we may decide to change for the Lerma *coche,*" I said to Tomasa. "I wonder if there is a *fonda* in Lerma?"

"*Fonda* there surely is," she answered, "for Lerma is a very large town; but of course the *señora* can't expect to be as divinely lodged in it as she was in my house!"

"*Claro que no,*" I assented.

Since this first visit we have returned several times to Silos. We have seen the passing of Abbot Guépin and all the old French refugees, and the accession of Padre Luciano Serrano, author of the *Fuentes para la Historia de Castilla.* With Dom Luciano, Spanish, hearty, and very young to be a mitred abbot, now ruling the community, Silos is once again all Spanish. Our friend Padre Alfonso, the lean, is now the major domo and has proven to be an excellent administrator, at the same time never relaxing in his researches and his bibliophilism. As for Padre Timoteo, round and

merry, a fellow monk who came two years back to call on us in Madrid thrust a photograph before our eyes and asked us to recognize the sitter. A bearded, prosperous-looking civilian recognizable only by the irrepressible twinkle in his eyes. Padre Timoteo! Yes, Padre Timoteo. Gone to Mexico as an itinerant book-vender—cheap novels. For how long? *Hasta la muerte.* The Mexican government never lets a Benedictine escape alive, especially one who has entered in disguise after the Exclusion Act! The gentleman from Bilbao, long since ordained as a priest or *padre de coro*, continues his enthusiastic unriddling of the carvings in the cloister and has just published an essay on the subject: *Ensayo sobre el simbolismo religioso en la edad media.*

When last we passed through Covarrubias we found the médico in open rebellion against his government. At the harvest festival the image of the Virgin, after leading the procession, was deposited in the plaza to witness the dance. A godless youth seized it as his partner, declaring that no girl of the village could rival the Virgin in comeliness. Following his irreligious example several others did the same and of course the *señor cura* was scandalized. The two guardias, *la pareja*, were called upon to intervene, but the populace opposed them vigorously. Notwithstanding, the young imps were lodged in the town jail

overnight, to be carried off to Burgos for trial the following morning. Then rose the médico in all his unbridled wrath. He declared the *cura* to be a fool for taking a boyish prank so seriously; furthermore he vowed that the offenders should not be dragged from their pueblo and family to be tried by an unfeeling royalist magistrate of Burgos; so, at the head of his republican townsmen he formed a cordon around the jail all night and defied the guardias. Only over his dead body, he shouted, could the boys be removed; but the next day more minions of the law came, a whole posse of them, summoned from Burgos. Discretion was the better part of valor, so the townspeople had to give in to superior force; they dragged off the fighting médico and at the same time four very crestfallen youths, no longer heroes, started to walk some forty miles to Burgos, between "the pair."

II
THE DISPERSAL OF THE SILOS TREASURE

II

THE DISPERSAL OF THE SILOS TREASURE

THE books and manuscripts shown to the visitor at Silos are but the debris of what was once the richest library of the Benedictine Order in Spain. How this collection came to be so sadly scattered is a favorite theme with the monks. Padre Alfonso told it to us up there in the chilly *biblioteca* that opens off the second story cloister or rather he filled in the details, for he had given the main outlines months before in Madrid.

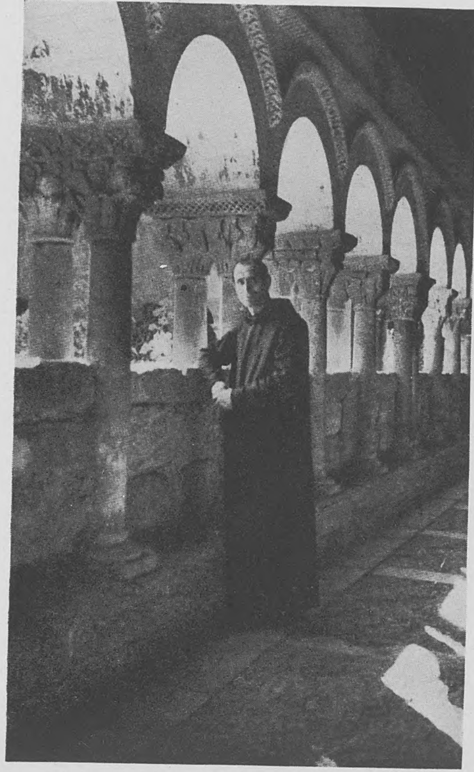
All its vicissitudes, needless to say, dated from the Disestablishment in 1835; regarding which Act let us reflect upon some data not communicated by the good priest-monk. Without going into the long and sorry story of Spanish misrule which began with the Hapsburgs and continued under the Bourbons, suffice it to say that early in the nineteenth century the Liberals were well-nigh discouraged when Ferdinand VII, backed by France, reëstablished the Inquisition and recalled certain Religious Orders which had recently been expelled. Nor could they, the Liberals, succeed in dislodging the clergy from politics during the turbulent years of revolution and civil war that followed.

During the Carlist War the Church stood firm for

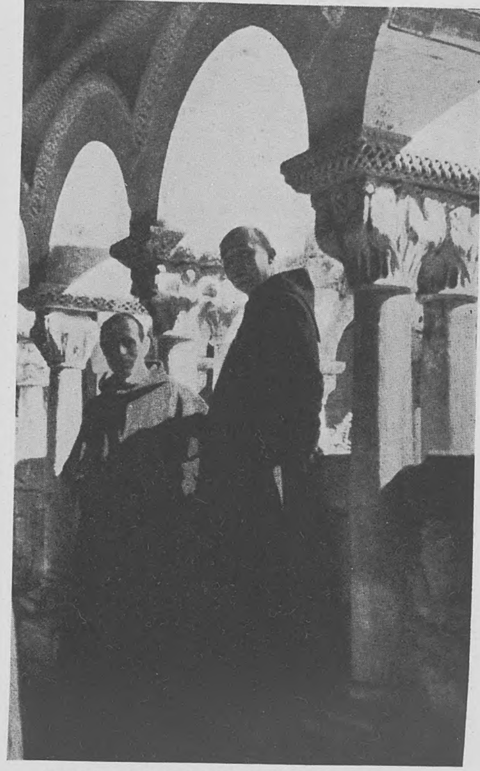
the claimant Don Carlos, brother of the late Ferdinand, while the Liberals supported the latter's infant daughter Isabel. Says the Spanish edition of the *Cambridge History of the Modern World:*

Imbued with anticlerical ideas, fearful of the power represented by the enormous number of monks and nuns (thirty-one thousand of the former and twenty-two thousand of the latter) and furthermore excited by the support given both to Carlism and to the principles of absolute monarchism by all religious orders, the Liberals sought to suppress them.

The first to be legislated against were the mendicant friars. A limit was put upon their number; likewise upon the number of nuns. As to the monasteries, all were closed except eight of special historic interest. Their property was sold, thus breaking up vast tracts of land that had been held from the beginning in an iron grip. The money went, or was to go, towards paying a crushing national debt, and the archives, books, and works of art, were to be distributed among public libraries and museums. At least such were the avowed good intentions of the reformers, but it is to be lamented that many priceless treasures went astray in the transaction, while simultaneously some of the reforming politicians waxed suspiciously rich. Other losses were due to wantonness and ignorance. An old man in Guada-



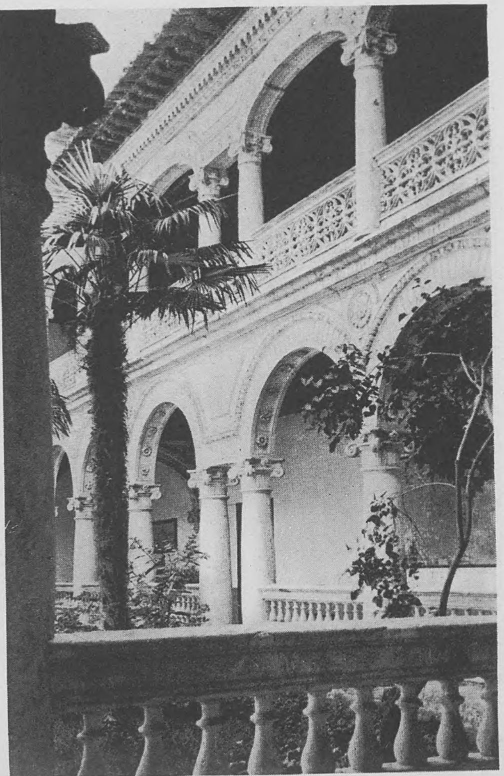
PADRE ALFONSO ANDRÉS, MAJORDOMO OF SANTO DOMINGO



PADRE TIMOTEO AND PADRE ALFONSO IN THEIR CLOISTER



THE CLOISTER OF SAN BENET DE BAGES
Now the home of a Catalan painter



THE CLOISTER OF LUPIANA
Now the home of a Madrid nobleman

lajara told us that his father had charge of loading ox-carts with the very considerable library of the Hieronymite monastery of Lupiana. The road to Guadalajara being atrociously muddy, whenever the carts stuck in the ruts the drivers lightened the load by tossing half the books out into the hedges. Other losses however were due to the monks themselves—to the efforts they made to evade the new law. This fact the picturesque story of the Silos library shows, though I am sure no such conclusion was ever drawn from it by the indignant Benedictines who recite it to their visitors; nor by Dom Marius Férotin, who tells about it in the *Recueiul des Chartes de l'Abbaye de Silos.*

Santo Domingo de Silos, it has been said, possessed the finest Benedictine library in Spain. The Order was always noted for its love of learning, and even as far back as 1050 Abbot Dominic, deep in the practical problem of putting a roof over their heads, still found time to start a collection of manuscripts and to form a school of miniaturists and calligraphers who began to multiply the few books that the neighboring nobles donated. It is on record that one of these diligent human printing-presses spent eighteen years of daily toil on Saint Beatus's *Commentary on the Apocalypse*, enriching its pages with a hundred or more illuminations that depicted the weird visions of the dreamer of Patmos. (This was a work of which

every Spanish monastery yearned to possess a copy. Composed in the late eighth century by Beatus, abbot of Liébana in Asturias, the miniatures made to illustrate it are now recognized as the chief source of French and Spanish Romanesque sculptures). Meanwhile another monk finished copying the *Etymologies of Saint Isidore*, the encyclopedia of all the learning of Visigothic Spain, which King Roderick's survivors had been careful to carry north with them when they fled before the Moors. All the more precious were these first accessions to the Silos library for being written in Visigothic, or more accurately speaking, Mozárabic characters—bastard classic with capitals of tremendous scale either dressed up in fantastic fish and animal designs, or almost submerged under a network of interlacings such as formed the chief ornamental motif of all barbarian tribes from Scandinavia to the Black Sea; and the Black Sea, be it remembered, was the last home of the Visigoth before his final trek into Hispania. Such were the weird characters evolved by the scribes among the Christian Goths who remained in Andalusia under the Arab dominion (the Mozárabs); and the free Spaniards of the north continued using the same characters until the early twelfth century, when the French Gothic letter was adopted. At the time, then, that Dominic, first bibliomaniac of Silos, was forming his library,

copyists were still working in Visigothic; but how industrious they had been was not known to, nor suspected by, paleographers until the dispersion of the abbey manuscripts.

In the early thirteenth century important manuscripts came down from France and were duly multiplied. Of the possessions of that day one of the inmates made a catalogue, still to be seen, but not in Silos, on the back of Folio No. 16 of the Silos manuscripts in the Bibliothèque Nationale de Paris. Its list of one hundred and five lengthy manuscripts meant a rich literary hoard for that period. Up in the Saint's own cell the monks show four secret niches or cupboards recessed in the thickness of the wall by Domingo, each fitted with its little book-stand, so that the copyist might work there and thus have no excuse for withdrawing a document from its appointed place. To remove a book from this spot was strictly forbidden except when the abbot himself consented to lend it to some other monastery. So there, up in the chill, sepulchral, dimly lit scriptorium of Santo Domingo, toiled those early "scribes, antiquarians, and chrysographists," writing bold, black characters on the parchment and embellishing it with exquisite little miniatures; slowly and patiently, year after year, and century after century, until the great Gutenburg invention brought printed books

aplenty and put an end to their particular kind of service.

Whenever a loan was made from the Silos collection it was methodically noted down in the convent annals. In the monks' possession is a list of such loans dating from the thirteenth century and showing that one of the distinguished borrowers was King Alfonso the Wise. When Philip II made similar application in the late sixteenth century the abbot was less obliging. It was when that monarch was soliciting throughout the land rare books and statues and reliquaries for his colossal Escorial. A king's request is a command, but nevertheless the Benedictines refused either to sell or present the works asked for. Finally on Philip's signing a receipt in due legal form the Abbot of Silos consented to relinquish a few volumes for a limited time. Unfortunately, later abbots were more lax about lending. In the early eighteenth century one of their most valuable possessions, that same rare *Apocalypse* completed in 1109 after eighteen laborious years, was lent to the monastery of Saint Martin of Madrid, an offshoot of the Silos house. That explains how it came into the hands of Joseph Bonaparte; for Bonaparte's soldiers sacked and pillaged Saint Martin's while Joseph himself was in his quondam capital, and he it was who sold it, years after, to the British Museum for a fabulous sum.

And all the rest—what became of them?

In November of 1835 a government official arrived at Silos to notify the abbot, Don Rodrigo Echevarría, that there were to be no more monasteries in Spain. Santo Domingo must be vacated and closed. This commissioner's further duty was to make an inventory of the abbey's treasures and turn it over to the state. But he proved too much of a gentleman for his delicate task. Don Rodrigo's dignified sorrow touched him, "Father Abbot," said he, "make the list yourself. I shall look for nothing, examine nothing."

Whereon Don Rodrigo omitted, as he thought, wisely, from the inventory all the precious primitive Visigothic manuscripts so zealously guarded in the Saint's own cell, also a rich library that had been the private donation of a recent abbot; nor was a goodly amount of church plate entered. All these, as we shall see, are precisely what have been scattered to the four corners of the earth.

The list made, the Benedictines went sadly forth from the only home they had ever wished for in this world and the abbey was closed. Some of them retired to the branch house of Saint Martin, on which the law had not yet laid its hand; but Don Rodrigo, the last abbot, could not tear himself away from the spot. As the curacy of Silos had always been an abbey appointment, and the present incumbent was one of

Don Rodrigo's own disciples, with him he elected to stay. This parish priest was also the village pharmacist, a fact worth remembering, for his medicine jars proved good hiding places for old manuscripts. From their modest manse at the monastery gate the two devoted souls saw their former home slowly decay. Harsh Castilian winters made ravages which they alone could not repair. Bands of roaming Carlists occupied it to its still greater harm.

Finally the pharmacist-priest died and Don Rodrigo found himself sole guardian of the pile. One day a government official came and demanded of him the deeds of all property that had ever been given to the monastery from the tenth century on, preparatory to selling it. These deeds, veritable literary curiosities, were accordingly handed over, and out of the three hundred the government employee carried off, only thirty were later recovered from the government offices. The abbot locked the library door till the next official visitor should come. This time it was to remove whatever Silos documents might be considered worthy to repose in the National Archives of the capital. Don Rodrigo opened the library and facilitated his visitor's researches, but without mentioning the precious hoard in the Saint's cell, part of which he had already buried and part of which he had deposited in a friend's house. Thus far the

cream of the collection was saved, as he thought, for the day when Silos should be rehabilitated.

Had the old abbot been left to eke out his days in peaceful Silos whose every nook and corner he had utilized for a hiding place, what he was trying to save against the day when the monks should be reinstated might still be there; but in an unlucky and an unwise moment, the venerable Benedictine, now past seventy, was called forth to become Bishop of Segovia. This was in 1857. Among other preparations which he made before departing was the summoning of Fray Sisebuto Blanco of Burgos to take the place of the late parish-priest-apothecary. Then he left. With him, out from the remote valley, came a chest of gold and silver plate which even the trusted pharmacist had never known about; also a quantity of books; while behind him, in charge of Fray Sisebuto, was left a great iron-bound chest full of manuscripts and monastery archives. This strong box, in which Don Rodrigo had taken the precaution to place the best of the Visigothic texts, was stored in a locked cell next the Saint's. The main part of the library, that is all the printed books which had not already been carried off to Madrid, he left on the library shelves.

These Fray Sisebuto did his best to care for; but the library roof began to fall in, and by 1865 snow and

rain and nesting birds had made such havoc that he notified the governor of the province of their impending destruction. This official promptly ordered their removal to the provincial library of Burgos. A most appreciable acquisition, this, for a small provincial *biblioteca*, and why, soon after, only a few of the Silos volumes could be found in it would have been an embarrassing question for some Burgos politician to answer. Had Don Rodrigo been there when the roof fell in, he would have carried his beloved books out volume by volume and buried them rather than confide them to a politician; but Fray Sisebuto, as Padre Alfonso explained to us, *was not a Silos boy.* It was a Burgos convent that had trained him, so how could he reverence Silos culture and Silos traditions and everything else in short that the old walls signified!

Even with the library dismantled there was much treasure of another sort left—the fast-locked coffer in the cell next to Santo Domingo's and, safely hidden away in still another nook, a quantity of church plate including the precious gold and enamel chalice which the Saint himself had ordered to be made "by the *Sarraceni*"; also two enamel salvers, and an Arab ivory coffer. And what did poor simple Don Sisebuto do but show these last-named one day to a tourist! Nor did he stop there. He uncovered the supreme

treasure of Silos! Hidden within a plain wooden altar was the magnificent twelfth or thirteenth-century enamel frontal which they used to place before the Saint's tomb as a retable—Limoges enamel on copper, embossed and set with precious stones!

The tourist proved to be a Spanish artist, gathering illustrative material for a large government publication on Spanish art. Genial and ingratiating, one can readily see how acceptable was his society to the solitary parish priest in that miserable little hamlet of a few hundred souls. Of course Don Sisebuto did his best to be entertaining. But four years later, when the artist's drawings of these very objects were reproduced in colour in the (never completed) publication called *Monumentos Arquitectonicos*, the state authorities saw that they had long been defrauded of a valuable haul—an altar frontal, indeed, which was undoubtedly the finest in Spain. They lost no time in presenting themselves at the monastery door, demanding the treasure, and carrying it off to the Burgos Museum, where it ranks to-day as the most precious exhibit there. The only comfort the present Silos inmates get out of this event is that the frontal and ivory box had received so much advance publicity that they could not mysteriously disappear, as did the books for the Burgos Library, during the short journey of fifty kilometres. It must be added, to Sisebuto's

credit, that he resisted the state's demand as best he could; indeed, he got the entire population of Silos to rise in their might; and a whole company of police had to come out from Burgos to enforce the order.

This treasure went in 1870; now let us trace the unrevealed boxes which the last abbot Don Rodrigo removed, as well as those left with Sisebuto on setting out for his new diocese of Segovia. Being already very old he did not live long as bishop, but before dying he notified the Madrid congregation of Saint Martin, composed mainly of monks who had left Silos in 1836, that they were to take charge of certain chests then in his possession and guard them until Providence saw fit to reopen their ancient home. To the original Silos store he added his own private library, of considerable value. Padre Sebastián, head of Saint Martin's, went himself to Segovia and brought back the legacy, storing it in a Madrid nunnery which had escaped the Disestablishment Act, and where he had a sister—the Benedictine convent called San Plácido.

Why not with his own community of Saint Martin? Saint Martin's, it will be remembered, was an offshoot of Silos, having been founded by that house immediately after Madrid was wrested from the Moors in 1083. But on it also the law finally laid its hand and its inmates at the time of the bishop's

death were accepting the hospitality of a parish house which had been offered them on the closing of their retreat. Hence the prior's choice of his sister's convent as a depository for the legacy.

Not long after the old abbot's death in Segovia, Padre Sebastián received a message from Fray Sisebuto back in Silos. He too was old, and he was going to hand over his parish, which had always been an abbey holding, to the Bishop of Burgos in order that it might be better cared for. He therefore advised the brothers of Saint Martin's (instead of advising Burgos politicians as on a former disastrous occasion) to remove the iron-bound chest that Don Rodrigo had left in the cell next to Santo Domingo's. There was no hope, he said, that the silent cells of Silos would ever again be repeopled, and he could keep watch no longer. Accordingly, Padre Sebastián who had gone to Segovia on the dying bishop's summons now set out on another and far longer journey and came back with another chest. This one, however, being small, was not stored in his sister's nunnery, but up in the attic of his own abode, the parish house, and never opened.

Years after, when these Silos exiles were all very old men, they received a letter from the Bishop of Burgos, who was tardily interesting himself in the architectural monuments of the province. Their ancient

monastery, he told them, one of the architectural gems of all Europe, was literally falling to pieces, and unless something was promptly done it would soon be beyond repair. The bishop, or rather the diocese, of Burgos could not meet all the expense, so he called upon this remnant of the old congregation for funds. Then it was that the monks bethought themselves of the box up in the attic; but it was found to contain only yellowed parchments and old printed books. That was disappointing, for they had hoped for plate. However, they determined to see if the parchments at least were marketable; and this is the step that the present monks of Silos have such just cause to lament.

Yet Padre Alfonso was profuse in excuses for these erring brothers. They had been, as he reminded me, rudely ousted from the abbey before their studies were complete; before acquiring that true Benedictine reverence for written parchments which surely would have been theirs had they remained longer in its culturing atmosphere. They had never even been shown those most cherished contents of Santo Domingo's secret book-shelves, nor had they been far enough advanced to decipher Visigothic texts. Thrown out as mere boys among the secular clergy, they thereafter received little more than the education of a Spanish priest "that is to say, *nada*." (One need

hardly be reminded that there has never been any love lost between the religious orders and the clergy). And so for them of San Martin the box in the attic was only a literary curiosity whose sale might bring in enough to patch up the tumbling walls of their early monastic home.

On making it known to the National Library of Madrid that they had a box of archives to sell, the director (my discreet narrator withheld the name) came and looked over the contents, but only to pronounce them insignificant historically, and of little value. More astute was a certain nobleman who had made a fortune out of selling antiquities in partnership with an illiterate old woman called Aunt Jesusa (the same who was caught a few years later selling priceless tapestries abstracted from the royal collection). For the sum of sixteen thousand pesetas these two worthies secured about seventy of simple Padre Sebastián's yellowed manuscripts and *incunabula*, and the happy monks promptly sent the sum to the Bishop of Burgos.

Shortly after, in the spring of 1878, the savants of all Europe were thrilled when the well-known Paris house of Bachelin-Deflorenne sent out a catalogue of recently acquired rare books and manuscripts from Spain which were to be sold in June—a costly catalogue with color facsimiles of the best offerings in order to

whet the bibliophile's appetite. The Visigothic manuscripts, dating from the ninth, tenth, and eleventh centuries, surpassed in numbers and beauty any collection known to scholars; indeed, scholars could not at first believe them genuine, so great was the sensation caused by their unexpected appearance on the market. From all parts came collectors to examine them. The director of the Bibliothèque Nationale of Paris, wiser than his Spanish *confrère* who had let the lot go by, rushed to the Minister of Public Instruction and got an appropriation generous enough to buy the best. The British Museum and a few private buyers secured the remainder, while the specimens of early printing went in all directions!—The cream of the famous Silos library, skimmed and stored away in an iron-bound chest by old Don Rodrigo's own hands, only to arrive at last at a Paris dealer's via the nameless nobleman and *Tia Jesusa*, each of the three fattening considerably by the transaction! Ninety thousand francs were paid, for instance, for one single item—The famous Mazarin Bible. This was the earliest complete edition of the Scriptures and the first work which Gutenberg and Fust printed with metal type. Printed at Mayence in or about 1450, it comprised two volumes, on vellum, with painted borders and uncial letters, and more than one hundred and thirty-five exquisite miniatures. It is now, I

believe, in Leipsig. Think of this and other rare examples of early printing being hidden so carefully by Don Rodrigo among the Visigothic manuscripts, only to be knocked down to the first bidder in Madrid for the paltry sum of sixteen thousand pesetas!

This is but one of the many book romances to be found in Spanish annals. The famous library gathered in Sevilla by Christopher Columbus' learned son Fernando has also had its vicissitudes, but fortunately it has not been depleted to the same extent as this vainly cherished Benedictine hoard. And what has Silos now of Don Rodrigo's iron chest? An American, or as they say at Silos, a Yankee gentleman, whose interest in Spain knows no limits, had facsimiles made of the capital letters in the Visigothic codices bought by the British Museum and the Bibliothèque Nationale, had them beautifully printed in color, and gave a copy to the present monks. This they never fail to show, with pride and gratitude, to "Yanqui" visitors.

As to the rest—the isolated hidden bits which Don Rodrigo tried to save for the monks, who, he felt sure, would some day return to Silos, his efforts were hardly more fruitful. The Order did, indeed, return to Silos when Spain raised the ban against monastics, but they were French monks, not Spanish. It was

December of the year 1880 when they arrived at Silos, and anyone who knows the spot, or for that matter, any other spot in northern Castile in winter, must shiver to think of the chilling welcome this long-deserted, damp, vast stone pile offered them.

With true archæological ardor these erudite Frenchmen attacked the almost hopeless task of bringing the old Spanish abbey back to the artistic and literary fame it had once enjoyed. The restoration of the buildings alone would have been a herculean task; that of patching up disjointed, broken traditions was even more so. Their first thought was for the library; no end of investigations and tactful advances were made in the neighbourhood, bringing forth, however, only a stray deed or charter here and there. Then one day, in the monastery itself, while clearing out a mountain of broken kitchen ware, they found the abbey expense books, complete from the beginning, and, tied with them, an eleventh-century Romano Gallic liturgy; another day, it was several Mozarab liturgies, these in the pharmacy jars. But the great find was in a neighbouring hamlet where the new French abbot went one day to preside at a funeral. Fifty years before, a box of manuscripts had been confided to the defunct in the greatest secrecy. As Don Rodrigo never came to claim them their guardian had passed them over to the village priest.

This venerable old man assisting at the same funeral, now delivered them to the new abbot of Silos. The *Morals of Saint Gregory* (tenth century), the *Rules of Saint Benedict* (translated into Castilian in the fourteenth century), and several works of the thirteenth were what the overjoyed abbot found in his hands.

Meanwhile this new head of Silos and his prior Padre Guépin were not ignorant of the fact that old Father Sebastián of Saint Martin's had come from Madrid years before to remove certain Silos property at the request of the late Fray Sisebuto; but in vain did they wait for its voluntary restoration. The abbot and Padre Sebastián had met several times in Madrid: in fact it was at the residence of the Saint Martin monks that the new abbot lodged on his visits to the capital. This learned Frenchman knew, as did every scholar in Europe, of the great sensation recently caused in France by the sale of the Silos manuscripts, and he could only conclude from the *Padre's* silence that these must have been the very contents of the vanished chest. Of the other chest which Padre Sebastián had brought from Segovia and deposited with the nuns of Saint Placid, the newcomer knew nothing.

Nor could he bring himself to commit the indelicacy of a direct question. He could understand how this

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enfant de Silos, never expecting to see monastic life reëstablished there, had felt that the documents were destined sooner or later to be dispersed; and how, having decided to sell them, he did not feel in conscience bound to confess his folly to these foreigners. However tenderly Padre Sebastián might feel toward them, they were not the legitimate inheritors of Silos. That he loved them there was no doubt, for, octogenarian though he was, he travelled all the way north to the ends of Castile to see the restoration of the monastery and to help with suggestions, for he remembered vividly how every nook and corner of the place used to look before misfortune fell upon it. He it was who, with his own trembling hands, had fastened the big new lock on the monastery door which was to shut the monks in (and women out). Yes, this old Spanish survivor loved the French monks who had come to Silos, but he saw in them a new order of things, not a continuation of the old.

One day while in Madrid the French monk summoned all his courage and his tact and told the old Spaniard about the extraordinary sale that had taken place in Paris, and the wealth it had brought to the Paris dealer. Old Padre Sebastián never turned a hair. That evening however he invited his guest to look over some old documents up in the attic. These were of course but the rejected portion of the haul made by

Aunt Jesusa and her aristocratic partner. The searcher, poignantly disappointed, was nevertheless glad to carry it back to Silos. But aside from this immediate result, the conversation had left Padre Sebastián troubled; he bethought himself of the box that had been handed over to his sister's convent of Saint Placid. Several times he had asked for it but the Abbess had refused to give it up. He decided to make another attempt to secure it, only to be told by the nuns that Saint Placid was in desperate need of repairs and the only possible source of funds was the contents, or portion of the contents, of the box in their keeping. Listening to his heart rather than to his sense, Padre Sebastián consented to their selling it.

One gasps at the readiness with which he and many others in the church have assumed the sole responsibility for disposing of an object of which they were merely custodians, never owners! Not only did the old gentleman tell his sister that she and her companions might open and sell Don Rodrigo Echevarria's Silos chests, but he never even gave the matter another thought till a few weeks before his death; then, fearing another refusal should he ask the nuns for the remainder, he confessed the whole affair to the prior of Silos and begged him to go in person and remove it. Alas, the chest now contained less than a quarter of its original treasure. Another

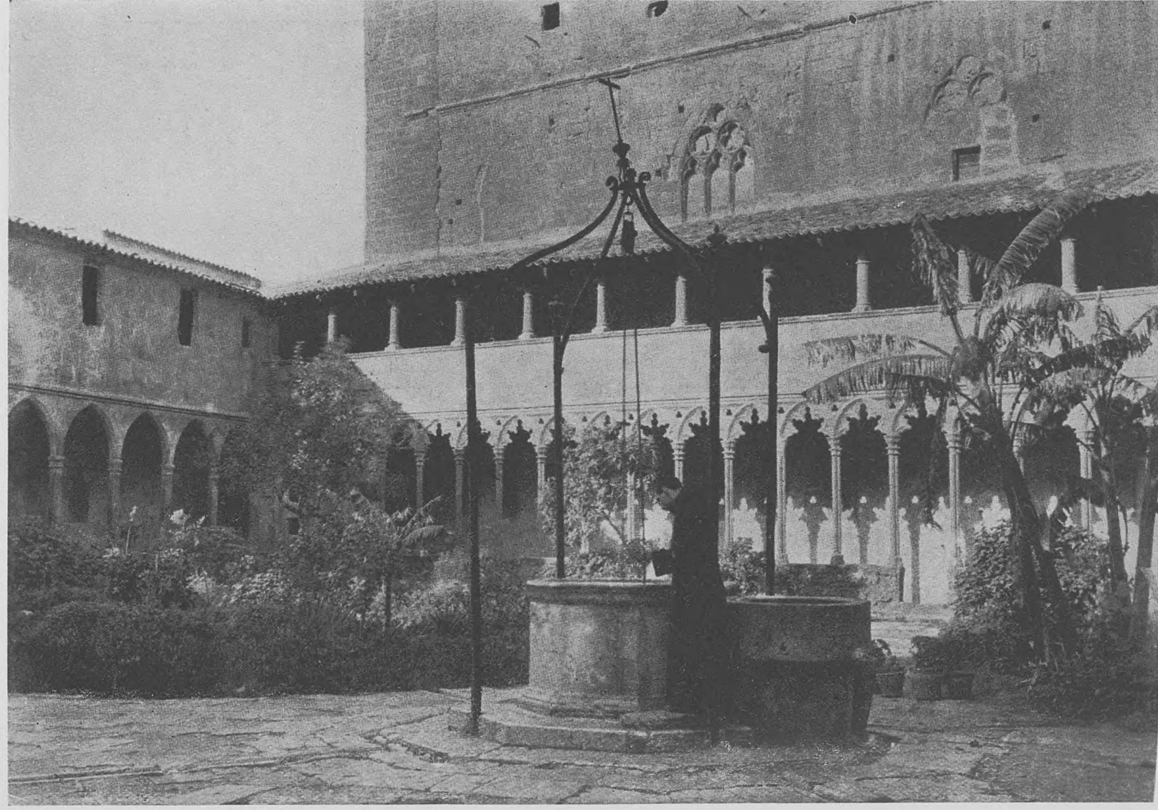
Madrid nobleman, particularly skillful in scenting out poor nuns whose convent roofs were falling in, had bought for the mere weight of the metal three golden chalices and two large basins, all with the escutcheon of Silos, an ancient silver casket covered with precious stones, a censer of great antiquity, and innumerable embroidered and jewelled vestments. Bishop Rodrigo's private library had also been sold. All that remained were two embroidered chasubles, a pluvial cope, Saint Dominic's crozier, and a few small objects in silver, and even these the sisters refused to part with. In order to make just restitution to Silos poor old Padre Sebastián, dying, had to invoke the law against the nuns, and to get the powerful Bishop of Burgos to intervene; and of course to make matters clear he had to confess all the sad story of this and the other iron chests that had been entrusted to him!

Short-sighted Padre Sebastián Fernández! Might he not have foreseen that the foreign monks would not live forever and that the Spanish youths they were training into learned Benedictines would inherit Silos and its past? These are the tenants one meets there to-day, and what joy it would be to them if they could show the visitor, instead of merely the Huntington facsimile of a few Visigothic letters, the priceless originals which now repose in London, Paris, Cracow, Leipsig and Munich!

The Dispersal of the Silos Treasure

A professor of Romance languages from one of our American Universities recently found in a Madrid book-shop an ancient manuscript entitled *Vidas de Santos*, which proved to be Gonzalo de Berceo's poem on the life of Santo Domingo de Silos. Berceo, one of the earliest Castilian poets, lived in the thirteenth century. With admirable generosity, the Romance scholar presented his valuable find to the Academy of History in Madrid. More accessible this to students than Santo Domingo's remote ravine in Burgos; and yet . . . how it would have gladdened the cowled bibliophiles of Silos had they been permitted to add the manuscript to their shrunken hoard !

THE CLOISTER WELL, CONVENTO DE SAN FRANCISCO, PALMA DE MALLORCA



THE CLOISTER WELL, CONVENTO DE SAN FRANCISCO, PALMA DE MALLORCA



CLOISTER OF CONVENTO DE SANTO TOMÁS OF AVILA
Prince John, only son of Ferdinand and Isabella, lies buried here

III

SAN ZÓIL DE CARRIÓN DE LOS CONDES

III

SAN ZÓIL DE CARRIÓN DE LOS CONDES

BEST visited from Palencia, whence an auto leaves every afternoon at five, reaching Carrión in about two hours. Also from Frómista on the Madrid-Santander line, a diligence which meets the two mail-trains, north- and south-bound, drives in about an hour. Anyone travelling along the Biscay coast, and who likes unusual routes, can come to Carrión over the grand Picos de Europa. Either diligence or auto (some days both) connect with the Santander-Oviedo-Gijon railroad at Unquera and thence climb high up to Potes, with a decent inn; but halfway one should get off and pass a night at the roadside *venta* in order to visit the very remarkable Mozarab church of Santa Maria de Lebeña (tenth century). From Potes, and in summer only, a mail-coach distributes letters and parcels through the mountain hamlets, and the driver will gladly pick up a traveller or two, dropping them finally at Cervera de Rio Pisuerga on the Bilbao-La Robla line, whence they go by rail to Fromista. This trip over the Picos is magnificent, but it can be biting cold even in July and August.

Palencia's best hotel, the Samaria, has removed

from its old palace in a quiet little side street to a new building on the noisy main street. Carrión too has changed, now boasting a brand new *fonda;* but travelling salesmen, the barometer so to speak of Spanish *fondas*, seem to prefer the antiquated inn.

Carrión de los Condes used to be an important stopping place for the Santiago pilgrims. It contains two churches of the pilgrimage days and the Benedictine monastery of San Zóil. But this we visit not for art of the eleventh and twelfth centuries but because it is in point of date one of the latest cloisters erected, and within its style, which is Plateresque, the best. It and Silos mark the alpha and the omega of the monastic era, likewise the two opposite poles of artistic expression. Between the age when the archaic Biblical figures were carved in Silos and that when fauns and satyrs and nude nymphs invaded Carrión, human creative genius had swung a wide arc. In every conceivable aspect the world had changed. No longer did pilgrims pour into Spain for the salvation of their souls; instead Spaniards were pouring out of Spain to seek material fortune in the newly discovered Americas. No longer did artists work from Oriental ivories and miniatures; their models came from Italy, plaster *maquettes* or even a printed book, redolent of finished classic beauty. This flowering of the Renaissance in a spot

saturated with the tradition of St. James offers a striking incongruity and must be investigated.

The stretch between Palencia and Carrión still bears the name of *Campos Góticos*, those Gothic Fields where the invading barbarians took deep root and laid waste the Roman civilization. In the dirty and inglorious-looking pueblo of Venta de Baños, near Palencia, Receswinth, king of the Goths, is said to have built the hermitage of San Juan Bautista, but there are sceptics who suspect that he merely rebuilt a crumbling Roman temple. In other hamlets hereabout, squalid and forgotten, hamlets whose population and means of subsistence have been shrinking apace for centuries past, one can find other early churches, Mozarab and Romanesque, of great architectural interest. Some of them, and Heaven be praised for it, still possess their old silver custodias and processional crosses. Of the Mohammedan interregnum, however, there is not a fragment. Every vestige of it swept away by Christian zeal!

One ought to spend at least a day in Palencia to see the splendid furnishings of its cathedral. The monument itself is second or even third rate Gothic; but in the early sixteenth century it had for bishop the opulent art patron Don Juan de Fonseca, and that meant magnificent accessories of all sorts. For

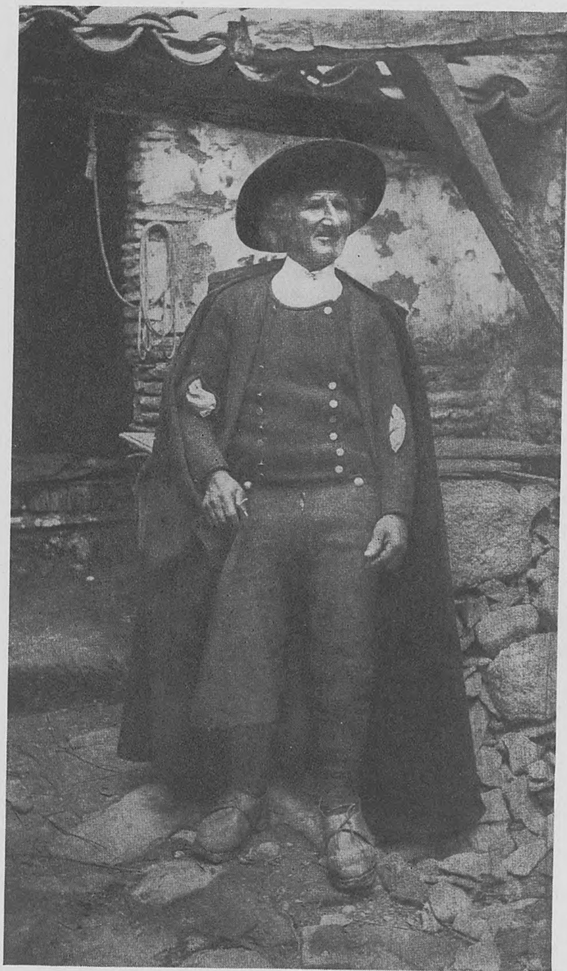
reasons to be suggested later this powerful ecclesiastic ought to be introduced to Americans; if any of them should then wish to make a pilgrimage to his castle, which is a truly extraordinary ruin, it lies not far off—in the beautiful pine groves that surround the station of Coca; indeed, some student who loves delving in archives ought to write the history of this high-handed and never over-scrupulous family. Between the years of 1450 and 1550 no less than ten Fonsecas were bishops or archbishops and enjoyed princely revenue (I fear most of them stood in the forbidden relationship of father and son). Bishop Juan of Palencia who ruled the diocese of Burgos as well and held important political posts besides, went to the Low Countries in charge of some matters for his sovereign Ferdinand the Catholic. There he acquired costly works of art for his two cathedrals. In this he resembled our abhorred countrymen of to-day. He had immense wealth easily acquired, and he bought abroad the art which his own country lacked most. (Of this wealth his ecclesiastical income was only a part; it is Las Casas, I believe, who records his vast holdings in the newly discovered America, where he had eight hundred Indian slaves). Comparing Bishop Fonseca with the modern Yankee, it does seem hard that the former should be hailed as an exquisite for removing art from its native land in order to enrich

his own, while the latter is sneered at as a vulgar despoiler. But it was rather of the Bishop's connection with the touching history of the one who made our modern millionaire possible that I meant to speak. This prince of the church, in his capacity of director of the *Casa de Contratación de las Indias*, or Board of Trade for the New World, made life miserable for the low-born Christopher Columbus. Our sympathies go out at once to the unfortunate discoverer; but the fact is that the shrewd Fonseca promptly apprehended that an intrepid mariner was not in consequence a competent colonizer, administrator, and viceroy to boot, all of which Christopher insisted on being; hence the trouble between the two.

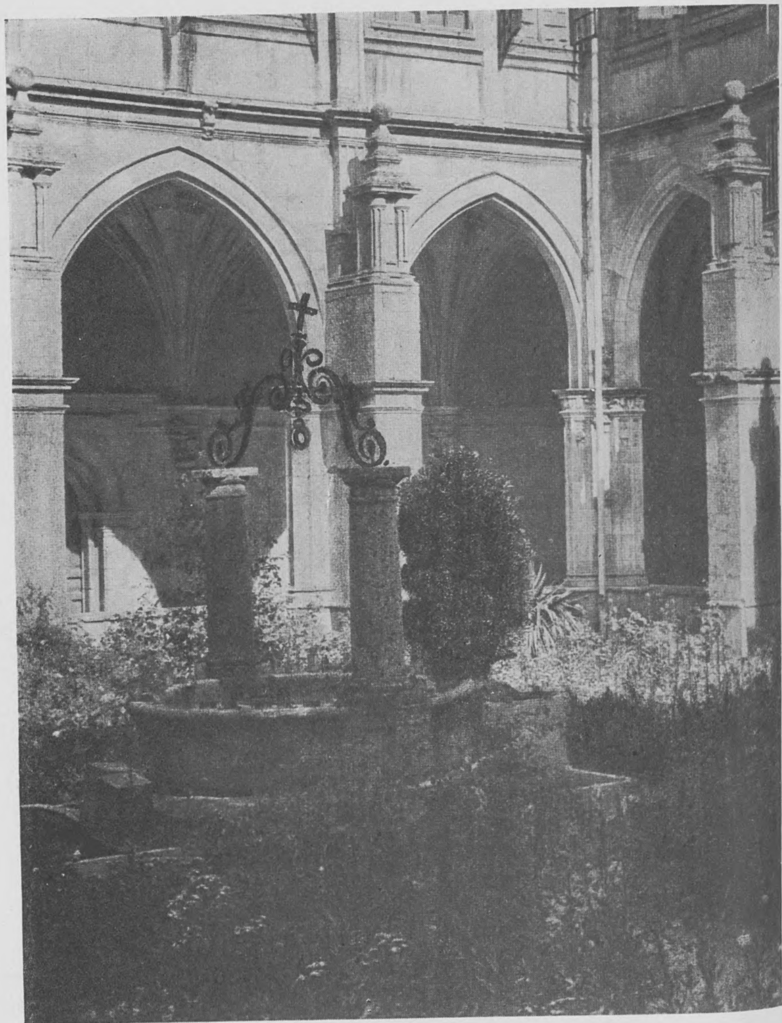
On feast days the magnificent Fonseca tapestries, fruits of the visit to Flanders, are displayed in the aisles of the cathedral, while the *capilla mayor* is made gorgeous from vault to floor with that superb Spanish product—damask. This heavy red damask with which all important churches used to be literally lined is more than a fabric; it is a Spanish institution. Tough as leather, of such body that the pattern stands out like the relief on embossed metal, it was Spain's unrivalled textile throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Not only every church but every house of any pretensions possessed quantities of it. Now not much is seen. Few cathedrals or families

have been able to resist the tempting prices offered by the antique dealers. One may soon say of it as of Córdova leather—not a fragment to be found in all Spain.

From Palencia to Carrión direct, a motor bus plies daily, as said, in about two hours, starting at five P.M., convenient enough, but as the road provided more dust than monuments, we decided on the shorter drive of an hour from Frómista station on the Santander Line. A wise choice, since it included the beautiful church of Frómista. San Martin is of fine proportions and beautiful detail. It has been standing since the battle of Hastings. It is quite seemly that in deference to its age the state should recently have declared it a national monument and put it in repair, but in this process every scrap of furniture was removed. Nobody seems to be responsible for this sweeping clean wherever a government restoration is undertaken. Carved stalls, tombs, vestments, choral books, etc., take unto themselves wings. The *monumento nacional* gets a new lease of life structurally, but its quality is gone forever. Between Frómista and Carrión there is a town called Villalcázar de Sirga which is fearing this same fate for its one treasure, the Church of the Templars. The Villasirga (for short) church is in bad shape, and the only way to save it from utter ruin



OUR GUIDE TO SAN ZOIL, WHERE HIS SON WAS STUDYING



SAN ZOIL, ONE OF THE LATEST SPANISH CLOISTERS
Rebuilt by Maestro Juan de Badajoz in the Sixteenth Century

is to have it declared a national monument; then and then only will the government prop up the walls; "but," as the *cura* lamented, "the architect's first step will be to clear out all the portable objects we possess under pretext of protecting them during the work. Once removed they will never come back. Far better that the bishop should give permission to call in the antique dealers who are forever importuning me. Then the Church, at least, would have the money." We looked his crumbling church over and tried to console ourselves by remarking that the beautiful thirteenth-century portal could not be ripped out under any pretext; but no sooner had we said it than we recalled that the entire façade of Cuenca Cathedral in New Castile had been despoiled, and the inhabitants were complaining bitterly that all the venerable saints who once filled its niches had been carted off in order that some modern sculptor might supply brand new ones of the Victorian Gothic type. In the Villasirga church there is a recumbent statue of the second wife of Don Felipe, Fernando el Santo's scapegrace son, which is one of the most exquisite figures in all funerary art. Should the restorer carry it off there would indeed be cause to mourn.

Frómista, Villasirga, Carrión, all of them stopping points on the Pilgrim Road to Santiago de Compostela. Before reaching Frómista the pilgrims had passed

through many other towns where great churches already stood or were building; at Puente la Reina they had crossed a bridge built for them by the pious queen of Navarre; and at Carrión they could rest, as we shall see, at a hospital built for them by another pious lady, the Countess Teresa. Even greater interest was displayed in their welfare by the monks, who saw to it that the road was kept in repair and that innkeepers were not too extortionate. St. James himself having vowed (if we are to believe the *Pilgrim's Guide*) to visit dire afflictions on all who failed to treat his devotees well, the monks were diligent in keeping this menace before the *fondista's* eye. (The monks indeed had more motives than pure piety for fostering the passion for pilgrimages). We modern wayfarers are not favored by apostolic nor monachal intervention; we must take both the road and the innkeeper as we find them; the occasional hardship will be offset by the grand old churches and by the chance to conjure up the wonderfully picturesque mediæval pageant that used to pass that way to offer up prayer at the tomb of Santiago.

A hot July day, and we passengers in the Frómista-Carrión stage were seated on layers of malodorous codfish which a benevolent grocer of Carrión had brought down by hand from Bilbao to gladden his inland, cod-hungry townsmen. (Dried cod, by the

way, used to be so scarce and so highly prized in Spain that the *cacique*, or political boss who dispensed the spoils of office, was, and is, known as the one who cuts the cod—*el que corta el bacalao*). Not only were we in the stagecoach seated on fish, but underneath the seat we had fowl—a rosary of live hens, threaded together, were flopping and panting, but we crowded humans had no space to do either. And on reaching Carrión at last, it was to find that its one *fonda* was filled with travelling salesmen, *señores viajantes;* Carrión, it was explained, was a shopping centre for many small pueblos of the region. For a moment disconsolate, we brightened when the obliging proprietor declared that cultivated foreigners who honored Spain by coming to study her monuments should not be turned away; further, that we should have the best rooms in his house. Accordingly their occupants, the *viajantes*, were sent out to sleep with a neighbor and we were installed; to be sure the best rooms overlooked a reeking stable-yard; and the previous occupant's belongings, hanging on the bedposts, were not removed; but it must be admitted in justice to the *fondista* that his food was excellent.

Those who have read *El Poema del Cid* naturally connect Carrión de los Condes with those miserable young caitiffs who tied their wives, the Cid's daugh-

ters, to a tree in the forest of Berlanga and left them there to be eaten by wolves. Thus assumes Herr Baedecker. For the credit of *our* Carrión be it understood that the disreputable counts of the epic were altogether mythical, whereas the counts who ruled Carrión were, Baedecker to the contrary, very real historical persons, and altogether worthy. One of them, Count Gómez Diaz of Carrión, had a wealthy and pious wife, Teresa, and she it was who built the monastery of San Zóil. And as Carrión lay on *El Camino*, she also built a pilgrims' hospital. A count who held his own against the king's enemies and a countess who was diligent in pious enterprises would of course have valiant offspring; and so we read that their firstborn went south into *tierras de Moros* and offered his services to the Emir of Córdova who was having trouble with a rival Moorish claimant at the time; in return the young Christian asked for the bones of the early Córdovese martyr, San Zóil. It was to guard these precious relics that Countess Teresa erected the monastery and gave it into the custody of the Benedictines.

This happened in the middle of the eleventh century. About that same time another box of bones, Saint Isidoro's, was travelling the long, long trail north from Seville to León, at the request of King Fernando I. We suspect that both saints would

rather have been left in sunny Andalusia, even though under the dominion of Mohammedans, than dragged north to inclement León or Castile where Christians reigned; but heaven help those whom Christian zeal would honor. San Zóil had to endure the second martyrdom of being packed up bone by bone, along with another early martyr with whom he had got mixed up in a Córdovese cemetery, and of travelling north to the tawny banks of the Carrión. As the young knight had spurned the grateful Emir's gold and asked only for Zóil's bones, Zóil, on his part, could not choose but behave handsomely *en voyage*. Many were the miracles he performed along the way. Indeed he continued to do so for some centuries after he was installed in his new monastery; but, like Poblet and many others of the saintly legion, he gave up practising at the very moment when a miracle was needed to save his own shrine from ruin.

The Plateresque cloister at Carrión is beautiful, but it is posterior by five centuries to the one that witnessed San Zóil's advent into the town. There is nothing mediæval about it but the idea. The monastic age having passed with the thirteenth century it would be only in the case of a rebuilding that the Renaissance manifestation known as Plateresque could invade the immured precincts of

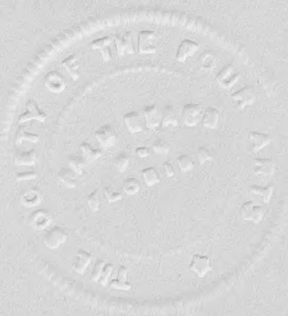
an already antiquated institution. And that is the case at Carrión.

The Condes de Carrión having endowed the monastery handsomely, and the monks having known how to increase their capital (largely through the pilgrimage traffic), they became in course of time the second richest Benedictine house in Spain. The first was the mother house at Sahagun—vanished completely. With wealth came the ambition to embellish the primitive monastery at Carrión. An entirely new structure in the latest style, Italian Renaissance, was decided upon. Juan de Badajoz, an architect who was performing that same regrettable service for the monks of San Marcos in León, was called in by those of Carrión. Juan was a good architect, even fine in his way, but we wish he had advised against the project. We wish that San Zóil, so potent in good works, had stayed his hand. True, Juan had his fee to think of; but he might have earned it just the same by counselling a new cloister from the ground up, but beyond the primitive one. But no, he began by pulling down the Romanesque arcading with its beam ceiling, (which I prefer to think was painted, like Silos, for Carrión fostered a large Moorish population long after the Reconquest). In its place a late Gothic vaulted gallery was erected. For, after all, the word Plateresque, *like silversmith's*

work, describes only the ornament of the early sixteenth century; the structure continued to be Gothic.

But Gothic with a difference. The vaulting is covered, literally covered, by figures in low relief; and so unrestrainedly plastic are these in feeling that one gets the impression of terra cotta rather than of stone. With Juan de Badajoz the use of the human figure as an ornamental motif was a veritable passion, and one might say of him what has been said of his more distinguished contemporary Berruguete, that if all the expressive and exquisitely modelled heads he left were photographed they would make a rich album of sixteenth century Castilian portraits as valuable for the study of the race as for the study of art. Juan's pupils, Pedro Castrillo of Carrión and Juan Celaya of Palencia, caught the spirit of the master and completed San Zóil worthily; and we have since examined a cloister very similar, full of portrait busts, which is surely their work, though unrecorded. It is in the monastery of Hirache, near the fine old Romanesque town of Estella, in Navarre.

Of course it is his own acquaintances, perhaps even humble ones, that Juan gives us in the guise of Biblical and historic personages; and of course he fills all spare spaces with joyous little pagan conceits, whisperings from Italy, and out of harmony with "the studious cloister pale." But somehow we are not



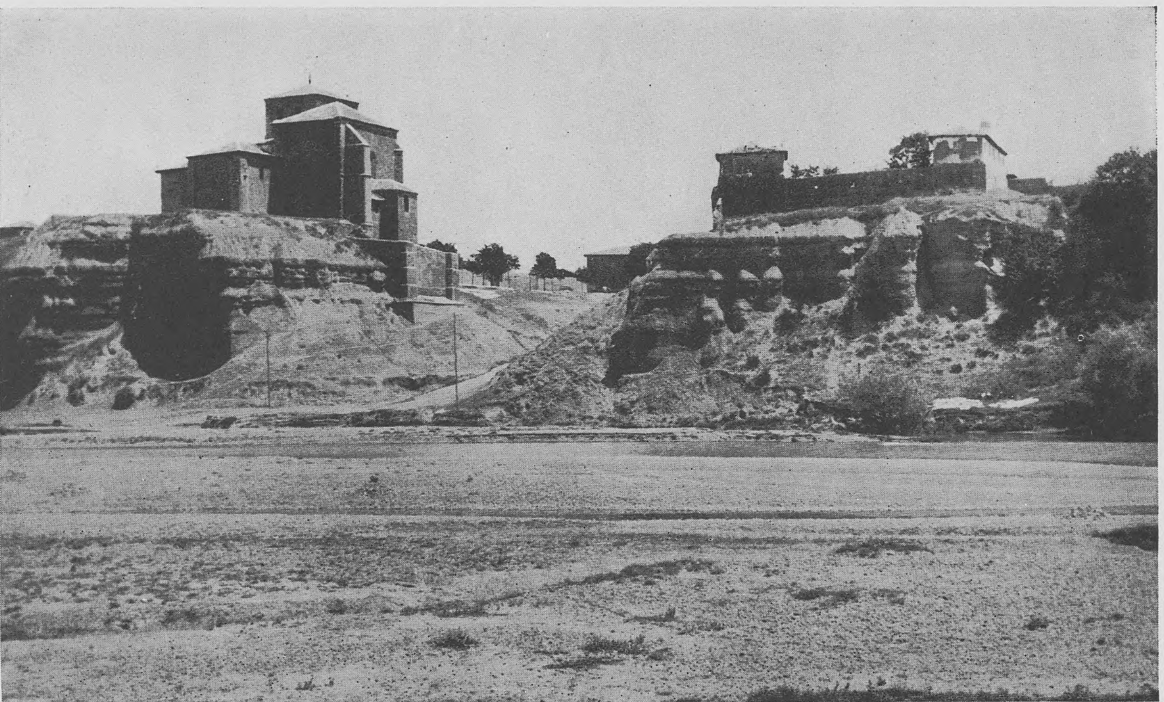
shocked. We know that to admire them is to sin against the memory of that much respected Preraphaelite of architecture, George Edmund Street, but then, did we not come here expressly to commit that sin? We do not expect a Renaissance architect, called upon to erect an ecclesiastic structure, to recast himself in the mould of a mediæval; we do not expect religious fervor from him; and not expecting it we are prepared to give ourselves up with irreligious light-heartedness to the enjoyment of Plateresque carving even though we encounter it in a cloister, and even though the memory of Romanesque Silos is still fresh in our minds.

Juan de Badajoz lived to see only one wing of his quadrangle completed, but worthy pupils carried on the work. As for the church the monks waited over a century before satisfying their ambition. This delay prolonged the life of Countess Teresa's monument, but it brought the rebuilding into a lamentable period for architecture. Instead of following the plans Juan de Badajoz is said to have left, the friars employed a classic revivalist of the Ventura Rodriguez School, and apparently, instructed him to do his worst. They got the big, banal, bombastic sanctuary they wanted, and with a foolish-looking San Zóil in pretty Louis XIV costume carved over the entrance. Here is what Quadrado says of it:





A BAY OF THE CLOISTER VAULT, SAN ZOIL
Showing Maestro Juan's passion for figure-carving



THE ARID RIVER BANK OF THE CARRION
Where once stood the palace of the Counts of Carrion who founded the monastery

We do not know whether fire or ruin or ill-inspired liberality made way with the Romanesque temple; we do not know the precise date of the new structure; we do not know the architect's name; nor have we tried to discover it for it would only be to hand it down to the execration of posterity.

The monastery of San Zóil is now a Jesuit school. One of the professors, most hospitable, showed us through the cloister and explained its abundant iconography. I do not know whether he was the one official cicerone or whether the lore he expounded with such facile tongue formed part of every inmate's study, but certain it is that he gave figures and legends with amazing volubility. Of the Benedictine order, he told us, fifteen thousand six hundred members had become canonized saints: even more, doctors; two hundred, cardinals; forty-six, popes; and in Benedictine monasteries a goodly number of kings and queens and emperors and empresses had sought peace. To show us, and it was very delicate of him, that we Anglo-Saxons had not always been beyond the pale, he pointed to the graven names of early British royalty—Santa Alfreda of Northumberland, Santa Etheldreda of Mersey, Santa Matilda of England. And Baeda, too, he told us, was a Benedictine—the Venerable Bede, father of English prose. Not a name nor a figure did our guide pass over in

silence. Juan de Badajoz, in his enthusiasm for plastic form, had covered the vaulting with myriads of figures—every character in the Bible, beginning with Adam, and every notable in the Order beginning with Benedict—and each one's story we had to hear.

Naturally a man whose whole life was bound up in these matters could not conceive that his visitor might be more interested in sculpture as art than as a story-telling medium; and as for the architectural *ensemble*, I doubt if the good monk had ever considered it. But we, in spite of his doing his duty by his saints, managed to make a few observations of our own, namely: that the San Zóil cloister was, like so many structures of its period, purely a sculptor's conception of architecture; that the small scale at which its copious carving is necessarily designed gives a restless effect; that the most beautiful bay is the northeast, at the entrance to the church; and that, finally, all the carving is so marvellously well executed that it defies criticism. Strange that this almost excessively delicate interpretation of Italian ornament should have been called in its day and in a land possessing colossal severe unornamented Roman remains, *Obra del Romano*. Over a century had to elapse after its introduction before the ineptly christened "Roman work" received the more appro-

priate name of *Plateresco*—suggesting the silversmith's filigree.

On many capitals and pilasters we found charming little fauns and nymphs, nudes. These our sacerdotal guide did not include in his expatiations. Worse, far worse, they must have been in his eyes than the bizarre fantasies that Saint Bernard fulminated against at a time when the nude had not even made its appearance in Christian art. I am told that it appeared earlier in puritanical Castile than in France (but have not made special investigation of the matter); that the first was carved on a capital at Frómista, shortly after 1066. Here at Carrión it is everywhere, in its hey-day. San Zóil, in fact, is the culminating point in the monkish reaction in favor of figure ornament; while the old Cistercian houses from which Bernard banished it stand as the isolated protest of one stern soul against a very human craving.

In the northeast corner of the Carrión cloister it is inscribed that the work was begun on March seventh, 1537, and completed in 1604. Our priest pointed out the bust of Juan de Badajoz himself, who modestly took one of the capitals for his own likeness, leaving the hundred and twenty large restless bosses of the vaulting for the saints and prophets, to say nothing of a few other characters less remote. Also we were

shown the sepulchres of the original Conde and Condesa, and their warrior son who transplanted San Zóil from the land where the orange trees bloom to the cold sterile clay of Carrión. When he had exhausted the sights of the cloister our guide was ready for the classic church, but we declined on the plea that we had already taken up too much of his valuable time. One may be able to like a Plateresque cloister designed by a renowned sculptor-architect in lieu of primitive Romanesque; but a soulless neo-classic church in lieu of a sincere early one still breathing a heartfelt faith, never! We did linger however to examine a few of the incunabula for which San Zóil is famous; then we said adieu to the edifying young priest and left him cloistered with his saints. We recrossed the Rio Carrión (by bridge, for like all Spanish rivers the Carrión is boatless) and went back into the clay-coloured town.

We are glad to have seen San Zóil both for its own sake and for the town's. True, the Renaissance cloister fell short of sanctity, yet the pile, church, cloister, and all the rest, embrowned and crumbly, should have satisfied one who had once been accustomed to look upon a New England Georgian white wooden house of worship as the embodiment of both antiquity and sanctity. But if short in this last

quality the carved cloister and the bright flower garden it enclosed were effective in another way. They had something of their own to say; a pagan caper, a facetious fling as it were in this very straight-laced Catholic land. While this new San Zóil was building, the sombre, morose Philip II was burning and decapitating heretics who may have been at heart more deeply religious than the good Juan de Badajoz. Philip was dreaming too of the vast Escorial he was to build where not one stroke of the carver's chisel was to mitigate the straightness of line or the flatness of surface; yet during these same three score years of the sixteenth century another more joyous than he was smiling defiance at him from this little corner of Carrión. And the smile still lives; the corners of the mouth curl upwards though the other features are masked in Biblical solemnity. What preceded the Plateresque cloister was truly Christian, and it should have been saved. San Zóil himself should have seen to it, but it must have been largely of Moorish workmanship, for all the artizan population of Carrión was Moorish until long after the Reconquest; whereas the present structure is Spanish, of the awakened European power that had discovered the New World and was pleased with itself.

Of the palace the Counts erected for themselves on the yellow bluffs opposite, only the substructure

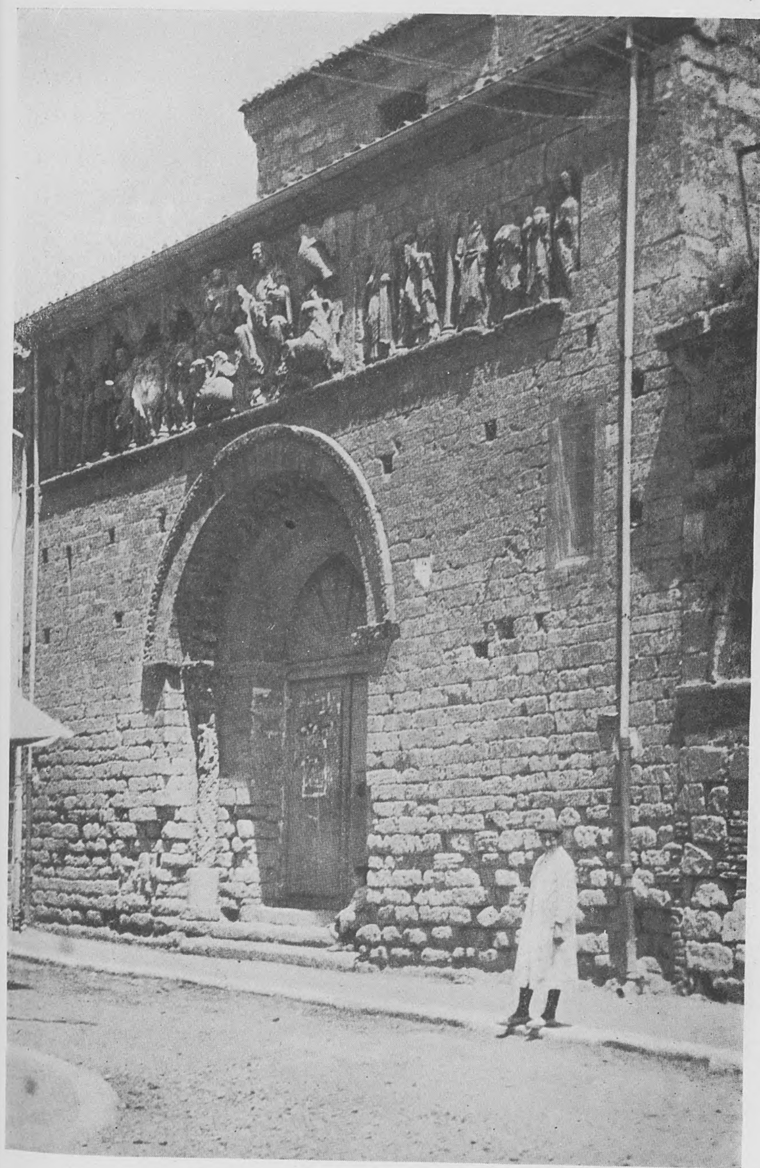
remains. This now supports an ugly seventeenth-century-looking church, but in spite of such evidence of anteriority the natives blamed the destruction of the palace on Soult's soldiers. All the region between here and Sahagun was overrun with them in 1811. But though in truth the French devastated ruthlessly in Spain, it happens that the great Carrión conflagration was due to the carelessness of the retiring Spanish troops rather than to the deviltry of the inpouring French. Be that as it may, this fine old town, that had so long kept unaltered its mediæval physiognomy, found itself irremediably disfigured. Besides several old palaces, two beautiful churches on the main street were the chief sufferers—Santa María del Camino, of the eleventh century, and Santiago, of slightly later date. Saint Mary of the Road, the only Road that counted in Spain in the twelfth century, the road that led to the tomb of Saint James in far-off Galicia. Saint Mary's lost all but the splendid carved portal; Saint James', part of the façade, but enough of the superb frieze under the cornice is left to rank the church amongst the finest examples of Spanish Romanesque. In fact, with San Zóil completely rebuilt, and with nearly every trace gone of the ancient palaces of the nobility, these two churches, fragmental at that, are about all that remain of the mediæval Moor- and Jew-choked town. There is, however, a

monument of literary interest. Just off the main street, a tall narrow city house is marked as the birthplace of the gifted versifier, Iñigo López de Mendoza, first Marqués de Santillana. The poet was indeed born in Carrión, and in the year 1398; but whether the modern-dimensioned house thus tableted witnessed the remote event is another matter. A very secondary matter, at that, for merely being in Carrión, its tablet serves to recall to us that the Marqués de Santillana was "the greatest honor and delight of Spanish nobility, a poet of the first rank, an assiduous cultivator of letters, and a Mycenas to tyros in literature," to all of which we heartily agree.

To the Jesuit school of San Zóil boys come from all parts of Spain. To our new-world eyes Carrión is a lonesome, squalid, uninspiring place to which to consign the coming generation, and the interior of that vast stone pile, undefiled by the abjured sex, is a cheerless, unwholesome home. We thought of another ancient monastery in the north, Veruela, where school still keeps. Over the entrance to the town is inscribed "Long live the Virgin of Veruela! This town is Christian, let no one blaspheme here!" In Veruela's fortified monastery we saw well-born little boys marshalled three times a day through the cold cloister and into the still danker church to pray,

and heard them droning their lessons in concert just as one hears it in the schools of Cairo; but in Cairo the pupils squat cheerfully out in the sun, forming a circle around their master; at Veruela and Carrión they are shut in stone-walled, sepulchral chambers, very Christian, no doubt, but biting cold in winter. If their eyes stray from the book it is only to encounter stone walls and bastions.

These monk-kept institutions for the training of twentieth-century youth do violence to our American solicitude as to hygiene, advanced pedagogical methods, the ethical value of companionship with the opposite sex, and in short, to all the cheerful opportunities of boyhood. We recall the American educator's desperate efforts to make the curriculum, the class room, the laboratory, the gymnasium, and above all, the athletic field, attractive and acceptable to the exacting young animal called the American schoolboy. We remember how, when the regular term is over, he must be provided with summer camps, superintended hikes, and peeps into the delightful secrets of botany and insect life. What a contrast this rainbow-tinted education offers to the cheerless environment of Carrión, reciting, praying, and decorously walking forth, all under silent sacerdotal surveillance. We reflect. Do we overdo it? Do we put too much sugar-coating on the business of



THE ANCIENT CHURCH OF SANTIAGO IN CARRION
One of the important stopping-places for pilgrims on the "Way of St. James"



ENTRANCE TO THE FORTIFIED MONASTERY OF VERUELA

acquiring a little learning? (for ours *is* little by comparison with theirs). Then certain men we know who passed five or six years in Carrión or Veruela come to mind and we have to admit that no shadow of a joyless childhood is visible. We are a bit at sea about the whole question, yet we decide most positively that not for worlds would we consign a boy to Carrión.

Some ten years ago one of the friends referred to above, a graduate of Carrión, wrote a novel that had for its title the four letters of the precept adopted by the Company of Jesus—A. M. D. G. Ad Majorem Dei Gloriam. Not having read the book we cannot say to what extent it constitutes an attack on the Jesuits or their school at Carrión. We only know that although the book circulates freely in Catholic, monarchical Spain, the copies sent to the Philippines were turned back by the United States authorities. Under the republican Stars and Stripes, born of Protestantism, the Order's interests received governmental protection.

A gentler Jesuit pupil than Ayala, Gabriel Miró, gives a touching episode of his own school days passed in a far kindlier region than Carrión—at the Jesuit school of Santo Domingo near sunny, fragrant Oruhuela. This chapter of *El Libro de Sigüenza* I cannot resist translating, and only hope that no

watchful censor may construe it into an attack on anything or anybody that must be specially protected. *El Libro de Sigüenza* is not a story of the stony cathedral city of that name between Madrid and Zaragoza, but of a gentleman named Sigüenza. Sigüenza finds himself travelling towards Alicante with a father and son, and learns that the latter is to be placed with the Jesuits at Santo Domingo. The sensitive Sigüenza is deeply saddened on learning the child's doom, and finally makes so bold as to tell his train-companion that if *he* had a son he would never educate him in a Jesuit college. "Nor would you," he adds warmly, "if you had known Señor Cuenca!"

"And who was Señor Cuenca?"

In Jesuit colleges, (explains Sigüenza), they say *you* instead of the familiar *thou*, and address even the tiniest pupil as Señor. Well, there sat at my side in this same Santo Domingo a mere baby in knee trousers and long white stockings. He was pale, thin, sad, dreamy. The tapes of his underdrawers were always hanging down and his shoelaces were always untied. He was barely eight, you see, and he had not learned how to dress himself. "Mr. Cuenca, Mr. Cuenca," the Brother Inspector would call in frigid voice. I would glance sideways and see my little companion's head buried in his arms, and the arms crossed on the desk. Then the same voice would command, "Mr. Sigüenza, shake Mr. Cuenca. He is asleep."

Mr. Cuenca awakened, the Brother Inspector would thunder that he must come up and show himself for inspection. "Mr. Cuenca, Mr. Cuenca," he would begin severely, "don't you see that you are untidy? I shall mark you for untidiness. Can't you *feel* that your stockings are falling?"

When the poor little chap returned to his seat I would help him pull them up. He had no idea of how to tie his garters securely, and I, while doing it, felt so big, so protecting. I used to smile down on him quite paternally.

Then came the long week of Spiritual Exercises. We passed it forbidden to speak, in examining our conscience, listening to discourses on sin, death, hell, purgatory, salvation. Windows were kept tight shut, the altar of the chapel was hung with deep black; and when we sang Pardon, oh Lord, Pardon! we shouted it with all our might, not only because they had told us of our desperate need of grace, but also for the satisfaction of breaking that death-like silence. But little Mr. Cuenca was not singing that day. His eyes were closed, his head sinking on my shoulder. I whispered a warning that they would punish us both; and he only murmured: "But my forehead aches so!"

On the last day of Spiritual Exercises, instead of Cuenca, another boy shared my bench, quiet and very devout. And Cuenca? I whispered. Tell me where is Cuenca. But he would not answer. At recess I asked the Supervising Brother for permission to speak but he would not give it. When finally, the last minute of the week of silence was up, and all the boys broke into their first shout of freedom and joy, I ran straight to the Brother Inspector and inquired for Mr. Cuenca. "Have you not yet learned that to ask

questions is a grave offense?" he said sternly. "Don't do it again!"

Defeated and humiliated I walked apart, thinking only of poor Mr. Cuenca. That pale, gentle child who when he smiled evoked more pity than if he had wept—why was he not with us? Where could he be, my little comrade with his olive green trousers and his thick, white, home-knitted stockings, loose and wrinkled—stockings that could not be kept up and seemed to be always imploring the deft fingers of Mr. Cuenca's mother or nurse?

Two days later, it was Wednesday, mind you, not Sunday, one of the brothers ordered us to put on our Sunday suits, overcoats, and caps. All curiosity, we then went down into the cloister, hoping it might be that the Reverend Father Superintendent of the Province had come to confer with the faculty, and that maybe he would grant us a half-holiday in souvenir of his visit. If only Cuenca were with me, I thought, what fun we would have together in the woods.

But a brother came along and marshalled us silently into the chapel. There, in his short black casket, lay poor little Mr. Cuenca aged eight. But he was smiling a wan smile,—a smile of triumph, for they had put him into long trousers and the stern Brother Inspector would never again tell him his stockings were falling.

IV
SANTA MARIA DEL PAULAR

IV

SANTA MARIA DEL PAULAR

BEST visited from Madrid, by the Guadarrama service of autobuses leaving No. 5 calle de García Paredes for Rascafrïa at eight o'clock every morning. Sociedad Castellana de Automóviles is written large above the door. The ride takes from five to six hours, and the traveller should provide himself with lunch to eat en route. From Rascafrïa to the monastery there is a walk of about a mile, a pleasant mile, with a boy from the garage to carry the valise. Another route, but only for good walkers, would be the steam tram from Cuatro Caminos to Colmenar el Viejo, whence they continue up the beautiful granite-walled Lozoya Valley; and still another, but it means stiff climbing, starts out from either Segovia or La Granja (guide necessary) over the Reventón Pass and descends the southern slopes of the Guadarrama straight into El Paular. This, as said, is for practised mountaineers. The snow-clad Peñalara rises some five thousand feet above both Segovia and Paular, and the Pass is only some twelve hundred feet lower than the peak.

For motoring there are several good roads out from Madrid as indicated in the Michelin Guide. Returning, one should pass through Manzanares el Real

to see the fine old ruin of the Mendoza Castle. All the Guadarrama excursions offer glorious Alpine scenery.

Knowing my delight in old cloisters certain Madrid friends who spend week-ends tramping or skiing over the Guadarrama Mountains had long been proposing that I walk with them from Colmenar up the valley to the monastery of El Paular. Lilac time, they said, would be the best for showing off this pride of the Sierra. But pedestrianism appealed more down valley than up, so I decided to go by motor and leave the tramp for the return trip. Nor did the others protest when their projected walking feat dwindled into an ingloriously short stroll along the level highway that led from Rascafrïa to the gateway of the Royal Carthusian Monastery of Santa Maria del Paular.

But the trip had taken long enough at that, for we started late; and no halt for lunch, balancing this on our knees as we jostled over the road. When at last we stopped before the massive arch that marks the official entrance to the monastery the clock was striking four. Delaying a moment to splash dusty faces at the fountain in the outer court we passed under the arch and handed ourselves over to Justa.

Justa, be it known, is the quaint little body who presides over the gate, locking it at nightfall with a very large ancient key and opening it again at dawn

to let out the shepherds and flocks that dwell within the farther court. For performing this service she receives gratis the cells and the big dark kitchen that once belonged to the *fraile portero*. By renting out the former to summer visitors and by cooking in the latter some very savoury dishes for them, she makes enough to support herself and daughter as well as to help four sons weighted down by the too abundant fruits of early matrimony. When it came to settling our bill Justa proved that she merited her pretty name.

As to events en route to the monastery, never have I taken a trip so devoid of them—of *cosas de España*. Partly, no doubt, because our own party made up a good proportion of the passengers, and partly because we were too near the capital completely to escape the urban type. Nevertheless, there was unceasing talk, what Alphonse Daudet would have called the "note du Midi;" but in the matter of garrulity Spaniards far outstrip the Provençals. Everyone laughed and was gay; the amusement being provided mostly by two miserably underpaid school-mistresses who were taking a half-dozen urchins to a workingmen's camp in the mountains. "There's the Madrileña for you!" exclaimed an old man admiringly. "*Donde no hay dinero hay alegria.*"

As to the pueblos through which we passed, only

La Cabrera, at the foot of a long spiny crest, offered entertainment.

This was in the form of a wedding. Bride and groom, arm in arm, were going the rounds from house to house, followed by youths with beribboned guitars and by all the girls and children of the village. The bride's artificial wreath of orange blossoms seemed to our modish eyes somewhat incongruous with her black cotton shirtwaist and skirt; but certainly no satin-trained, kid-gloved bride could have looked more radiant. The thin-nosed priest with whom we chatted for a spell was full of admiration for the groom. "A true caballero!" he pronounced him. "The best guitarist of them all, and the best dancer, he himself leading off and calling all the changes in the figures. That was the way they did it in Aragon!" From which it was not difficult to deduce that the priest was Aragonese.

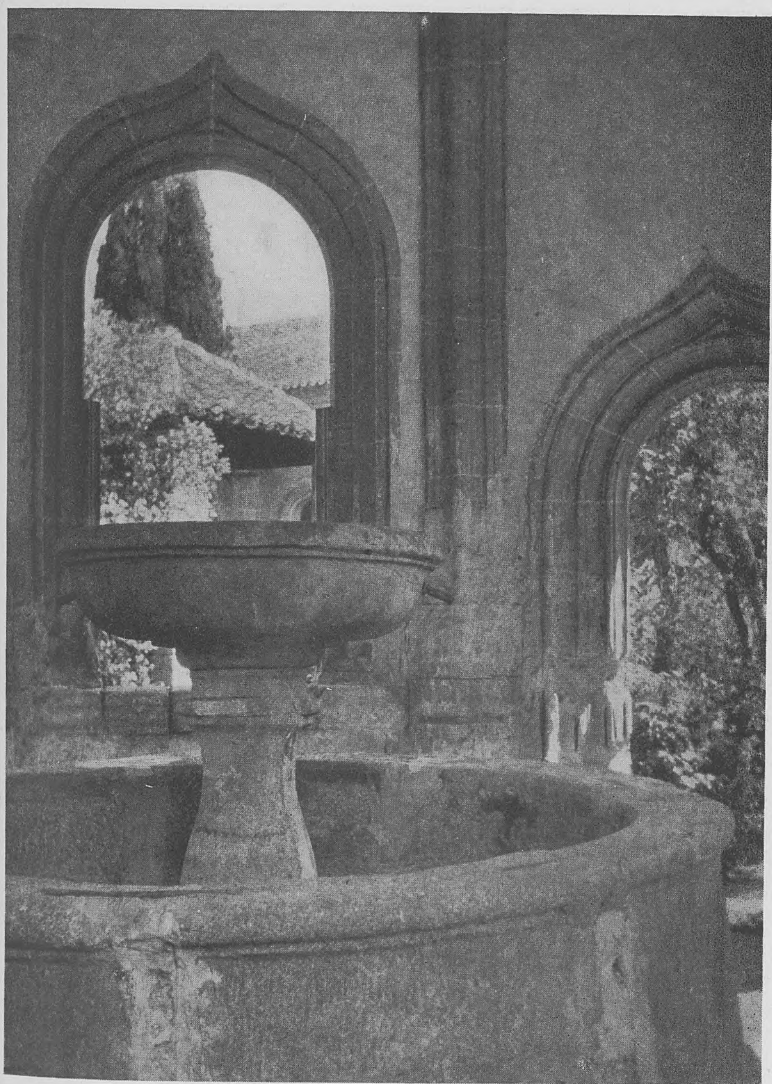
All along we were catching glimpses of the pretty Lozoya whose delicious water is brought to Madrid for a distance of about forty-five miles. Its source, La Laguna, lies nearly at the snowy top of Peñalara, eight thousand feet above the sea. The Marqués de Santillana, who is not really of that distinguished Mendoza family whose title is rehabilitated in his person, but who is nevertheless an aristocrat and very public-spirited, built a large reservoir out at the

Mendoza castle of Manzanares, and wanted to connect it with the Lozoya canal; but as the Manzanares water was declared by chemists to be inferior to the Lozoya, the engineer of the latter protested before the government to such effect that the Marqués had to build his own conduit all the way to the city, thus reducing somewhat the profits of his enterprise; but he really has no reason to complain; the Madrileños, though they say his water is fit only for washing, patronize most generously two other beverages which he has on the market—wine from his vast vineyards and milk from his model dairy. Both are sold from one and the same shop on the stately Castellana, and the sign over the door reads "Santillana's wine and Cow's milk."

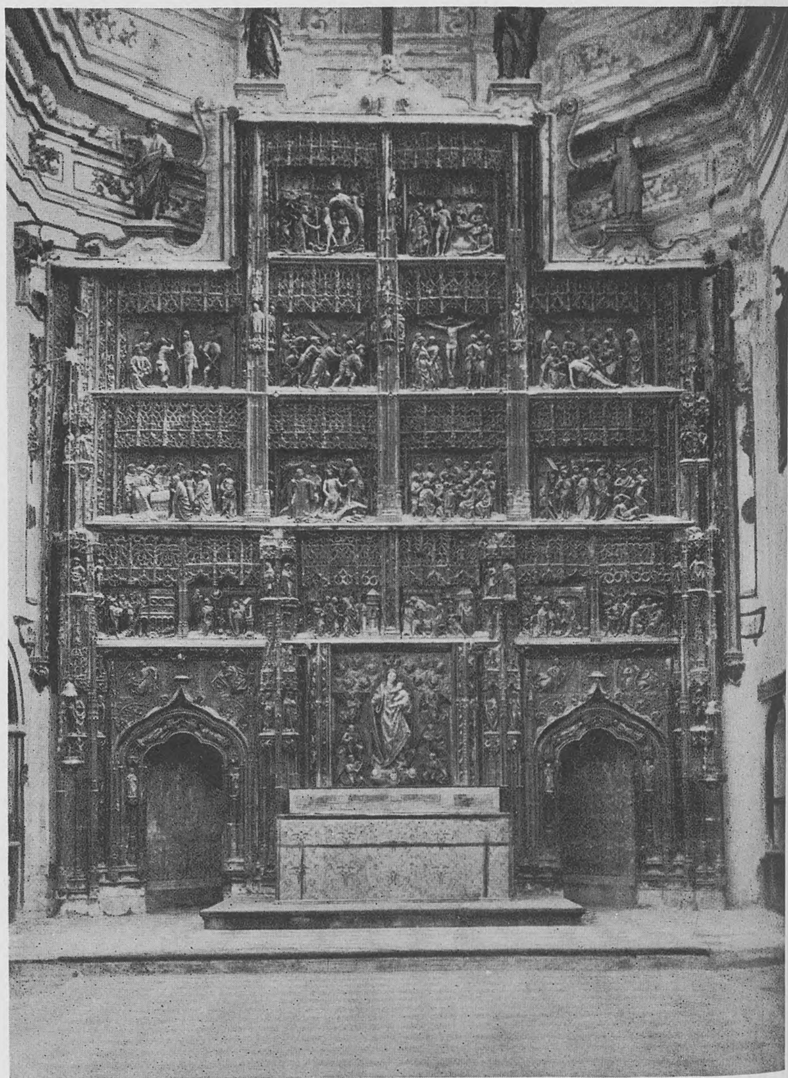
The Lozoya, besides its gift of delicious water to the capital and toothsome trout to the uplying pueblos, has created a verdant valley that gladdens the eye accustomed to travel through arid Castile—a valley that could support a far more numerous population than that gathered in the few red-roofed villages through which we passed. As far back as 1302 the Segovians discovered its charms and came over the lofty natural wall that separates Old from New Castile and founded five pueblos; since then the number appears to have remained stationary. Being thus destitute of important towns and their

correspondingly important possessions, the valley offered but poor pickings to the French hosts whom Napoleon led in person over the Somosierra Pass. As the Somosierra road joins the Madrid highway at least ten miles above the monastery, and as Napoleon was too eager to reach his goal that same day to allow any side-stepping, the rich *Cartuja* of Paular was left for the moment in peace.

"A secret nook in a pleasant land" is what nature destined the head of this valley to be, and any such nook was sure to fall to the monks sooner or later. In this case neither cow, as at Gaudalupe, nor bull, as at Sigena, magnetized by a hidden image, scented it out for them. Royal invitation brought the Carthusians direct, but it must be admitted that one of their number had to keep nagging the royal personage in question in order to bring him to the point of giving the invitation due legal form. The story is a first edition, as it were, of the Escorial legend. Henry II, making war against the French, burned a monastery of that austere and silent order which had been founded by San Bruno in the late eleventh century. The royal conscience appears to have been more tender over this piece of military destruction than the imperial German conscience of our own time, for it bothered the offender all his life. We who look back



THE WELL-HOUSE OR LAVATORY IN THE LILAC CLOISTER, EL PAULAR



THE LOFTY MARBLE RETABLE IN THE MONASTERY CHURCH, EL PAULAR
Said to have been brought by ox-cart from Genoa in 1490

on that life might consider the misdeed venial by comparison with others of the same authorship, for those were the days when this same bloodthirsty Henry the Bastard and his brother Peter the Cruel were filling the land with internecine feuds. Be that as it may, it is the only sin for which the king tried to make reparation; dying, he enjoined upon his son to invite French Carthusians to come and settle in his hunting park at El Paular. As the deathbed promise was promptly forgotten by John I, the monks, who somehow got wind of it, sent one of their number from Scala Dei in Gascony to the court of Castile to nag the royal defaulter until the installation of *Les Chartreux* in Spain should become an accomplished fact. And just in time, too, for death had already marked King John. His successor, Henry the Ailing (El Doliente) was inclined to treat the new-comers handsomely, presenting them with his own hunting lodge and far-reaching pasture lands; while John II, he who held brilliant court in the Alcazar of Segovia, made them masters of the whole of the River Lozoya with exclusive rights to its coveted trout, and certain other benefits besides. It was in his reign that the building of the monastery church began, and he himself, it is said, chose the architect and ordered the *Retablo Mayor*. The royal privilege, dated May 15, 1432, opens as follows:

The King, Don Enrique my great-grandfather, to whom may God give Holy Paradise, because of the memory of a monastery of the said Order of the Chartreuse which he had to burn during his campaigns in France, commanded, for the acquittal of his conscience, that the King Don Juan, my grandfather, to whom may God give Holy Paradise, should build a monastery in his kingdoms of Castile, complete according to the Order of the Chartreuse.

This same monarch, it will be recalled, left his hunting lodge of Miraflores near Burgos to the same Carthusian order, but this establishment was quite independent of the group at El Paular.

From Henry IV, the Impotent, the Guadarrama community received hard cash—eight hundred golden florins for the promise of burial within its walls. What his successors the Catholic Sovereigns did for it I have not discovered, but their *Gran Capitán*, Gonzalo de Córdova, gave the monks lands in Granada which he had recently received from the Crown; and as their grandson Charles V retired frequently to El Paular, submitting to all the rigors of the rule, we may presume that he too gave substantial recognition of his esteem. Certain it is that long before, in 1460, the Carthusians in the Sierra had amassed such vast wealth that they talked of establishing a daughter house, and this project materialized as soon as *El Gran Capitán* presented the Granada land. There, in

the Moorish city that was fast vanishing under Christian hands, the daughter house of Paular was begun in 1516.

Richer and richer waxed the Order; at a time when the uncloistered of the kingdom were sunk in abject poverty the cloistered ones were literally lining their homes with gold, as we shall presently see. "But their power was not due to their wealth," Quadrado artlessly reminds us, "but to their superior virtues and the force of their prayers. To one of the Carthusians of El Paular who prayed unremittingly that the sins of Peter the Cruel" (sins which history shows to have been deep and black as hell) "might be graciously overlooked, that monarch appeared in a vision to express his thanks and to assure the intercessor that his term in purgatory had been made extremely short" (just a mere matter of form, as it were) "and that he was at that very minute enjoying the full delights of Paradise." On another occasion it was Charles V, still in the flesh, who benefited. While crossing the Mediterranean to make war on the African Moors a fearful tempest beset him. "They must all perish," his captain announced. "Perish we shall not," replied the monarch unperturbed. "At this very minute they are praying for me in La Cartuja del Paular, and their prayers are always answered."

What meanwhile were the monks in the silver poplar grove—the *pobolar* or *paular*—doing architecturally? Unlike the French orders that had entered Spain long before, they did not bring their own architects. They accepted a Moor of Segovia, who built them a church of that typical "Catholic Kings Gothic" with which the cities of Avila and Segovia familiarize the traveller—the local granite style with coarsely carved portals and many escutcheons. To the north of the church they laid out their cloister, which, by the precedent of Saint Gall, should have been to the south; nor does anyone know why they chose the less sheltered side. Around cloister and cells are grouped the usual dependencies—chapter-room, library, refectory, kitchens, pantries, wine-vaults, infirmary; back of the convent group, an immense *huerta*, cattle sheds and mills and other isolated structures. Between church and road they laid out a commodious guests' cloister or patio with a fountain in the centre and double-storied apartments overlooking it. This outer patio is approached by a shady road that turns in from the highway, on one side a monumental fountain, on the other a chapel where royal visitors used to stop and pray before entering the monastery proper; now the Gothic chapel is a sheep-pen, and one passes it by without that formality, going straight on through the great Baroque arch to

consult Justa on the very practical matter of food and lodgings.

I have said that we arrived at the end of the afternoon, but in Castile a May afternoon ends in a long greenish twilight. The very moment for the cloister! declared those who had been to Paular before; and to the cloister they led me after but scant inspection of anything else. Across the guests' enclosure, through a vaulted passage from which, I believe, opened what was the prior's residence, and across another court into the narthex of the church; here I wanted to stop and examine a crude but touching Mater Dolorosa above the door, but they said that could wait till to-morrow, so on I followed them through another and longer vaulted passage; suddenly we stepped into the delicious fragrance and almost unearthly quiet of the cloister.

Well indeed did it merit their affectionate memory. As we first saw it in the pale green Castilian twilight, with no sound but the whirr of homing sparrows that nest in the gargoyles or of storks flapping up in the belfry, the large lilac-laden quadrangle made an irresistible appeal. To add to its sweet melancholy it is called El Cementerio. In it each monk dug his own nameless grave, wherefor it is quite fitting that it should contain not one but a whole grove of tall cypresses. Of what was laid away below ground there

is now only one outward and visible sign—the grave of a bishop of Segovia who in 1629 came over the mountain to consecrate the long-building church. At his feet stands a lofty cross, half Gothic, half Plateresque, under a bright red tiled roof that makes a vivid spot against the sombre cypresses. Still another roofed structure is the central lavatory—that six-sided type that one associates with the Cistercian Order. All the flower beds are outlined with aged box, and behind the box rise the lilacs that add so much to the May enchantment. When I say that the cloister covers a fifth of an acre it means many lilacs. Indeed, Paular and the Cartuja at Jerez are the largest cloisters I have ever seen, and large perforce Paular must be not to seem crowded with its central wellhouse, its canopied cross, its episcopal tomb, and its many cypresses and lilacs. For its perfume, its color, its agreeably filled-out composition, it is an exquisite spot.

Closer examination proved the appeal of the cloister to be apart from and greater than its architectural deserts. The Moor of Segovia who planned it must have been a Christian, and his ancestors must have been living some five hundred years under Christian rule; he and they had forgotten the ivory boxes and miniatures and woven silks of Arab Spain. He designed no Oriental capitals with hidden messages;

merely good leaf ornament, good rib vaulting, good traceried openings to the gallery bays—all good though perfunctory late Gothic, Europe as distinct from Asia.

The ensemble of the Cartuja as it revealed itself next day excelled, like the cloister, in the picturesque rather than the architectonic quality. It was not semi-military like Guadalupe with mediæval towers standing sentinel to a whole village; nor elegant of line like Poblet; but what it does possess and in this it is unique, is a most domestic air; many chimneys, broken roof lines, many windows, even curtains at some. One does not have to be told that Paular receives summer visitors. Indeed some of the tenants in the guest-patio where Justa presides remain summer and winter, (and none of them observe the Carthusian vow of silence). Paular underwent much doing over in the Baroque period but on the outside at least this did not disfigure. In the outer patio it is pleasant and playful. Even before the painter gave it the finishing touch it must have looked naïve. The cloister walk is divided into bays by absurdly massive granite columns, and its beamed ceiling supports a very low second story with very tiny windows. Scale, it will be seen, was happily discarded and the painter emphasized the fact by simulating classic pilasters over the fat columns, painting the walls

orange and the casement frame bright green within a blue cartouche. In combination with the red of the sloping roof his color scheme would make any twentieth-century painter of *primitives* envious. The pavement of the gallery is in the same spirit, though I am sure it was never meant to be amusing. It is in fact the characteristic pavement of all Cartujas—gray and brownish river-pebbles laid in thick cement, and enlivened by a large cinquefoil pattern in sheeps' knuckles, blanched very white. Like the child who prints the title to his drawing, the *hermano* who laid it spelled out, in knuckle-bones, the word *Portería* in front of Justa's door, *Hospedería* (but he dropped his H) in front of the stairs leading to the upper chambers, *Botico* at the pharmacy entrance, and a word that might have been *Priorato* but is now obliterated at the entrance to the vaulted passage I have mentioned. In this corner his task appears to have finished, for here, with the knuckles left over, he outlined the date ANO DE MIL 696.

From this friendly outer patio the silence of Carthusian days has forever departed. It is in fact a mildly noisy place throughout the day. Through it pass all the herds of the present owner of Paular on their way to pasture, with their collar-bells tinkling and the shepherd's dog barking at their heels. Old Justa has to rise at four to let the first of them out,

and, as she loves a clean doorway, she always has to ply her broom after they have passed. This operation, necessary several times a day, is performed with many a sigh and many a *Jesus* or *Madre de Dios* or *Ave Purisima*. Then there are the children of the *administrador* who lives in the rooms under the belfry, and the numerous offspring of the *pareja* (the two *Guardias Civiles*) who live in the farther court where the stables are, but who prefer to come and play around Justa's lodgings; and the occasional automobile parties that come from Madrid to lunch in the patio, and leave papers and fruit-skins strewn about, to her great distress. Taking it all in all, Justa pays for her rent-free cells and kitchen. Never lived a more conscientious keeper of the gates, and no cleaner cloister ever presented itself to us moderns who have the curious fancy for invading such antiquated spots.

According to an old history of El Paular written in Latin, and which José Maria Quadrado consulted when preparing his chapter for *Recuerdos y Bellezas de España*, the first architect employed by the Carthusians to build their Gothic church was a Moor of Segovia named Abderrhaman; or more accurately speaking, a Mudéjar, seeing that he was a Moor living under Christian rule; and in spite of retaining his Arab name, it would be safe to presume that he had

embraced Christianity, in which case (we are still trying to be accurate) he would have been not a Mudéjar but a Morisco. Be that as it may, Abderrhaman stood high in Christian favor. He had worked on the royal Alcazar of Segovia, and came thence royally recommended to the monks. That Moorish workmen in plenty were on the spot is borne out by many little devices peculiar to them; in the cornice running around the cloister, for instance, the granite has been tediously carved into the pointed pattern which Moors obtained in their own buildings by laying bricks with a corner out instead of the end, and projecting course beyond course. Travellers familiar with Toledo or Zaragoza, to mention only two of the Mudéjar cities of Spain, will recognize the device. Also, in church, in sacristy, everywhere in fact, there is a profusion of painted and glazed tiles; and until the middle of the eighteenth century there was a typical Mudéjar wooden ceiling over the single nave of the church. This had been painted, probably, by the same Moors who decorated the celebrated series that perished when the Alcazar was gutted by fire in 1862.

This lamentable fire was caused, they say, by one of the guardians throwing his unextinguished cigarette into a pile of papers; in the case of the Paular church, it was the Lisbon earthquake of 1755 which gave the



IN THE CLOISTER, EL PAULAR

The tomb of the Bishop of Segovia who came over the mountains to consecrate the Monastery Church in 1629



WHERE THE CARE-TAKER LIVES AT EL PAULAR
Under the belfry in the outer patio



Photograph by Hielscher

THE STATUE OF SAN BRUNO
Founder of the Carthusian Order
CARTUJA DE MIRAFLORES, NEAR BURGOS

Baroque-obsessed monks the longed-for pretext for ripping out their wooden *artesonado*, raising the height of the church walls, and ceiling them in with a thin brick and plaster vault—from the outside a wretched botch. No doubt other wooden ceilings originally covered the various dependencies but they met the same fate. If any other feature besides the wooden covering proclaimed that Moors worked on the church it is now lost to sight. The honest granite walls were smeared inside with plaster and painted with counterfeit Corinthian pilasters; the thin plaster vault serves as a field for gorgeous sun-bursts, garlands, cupids, and what not. The architectural impression is that of a profane setting—something to be hastily removed after the act is over and the curtain drops. The air of sanctity is forever gone.

In the matter of flaring gold altars, however, the church escaped lightly as compared with the sacristies and added chapels. Only two were set up, these separating the *coro* of the lay brothers from that of the *professed*, or *sacerdotes*, and the two connected by an airy gilt arch on which rests, tip-toe, an equally airy Virgin brilliantly painted and gilt—*Una Purisima*, as they call these fairy-like creatures, carved or painted. Is it not of a Carthusian painter of this very convent that they tell the irreverent joke about the naming of his picture? He turned out

religious paintings in a flood; the abbot, dropping into his cell, saw a haloed head blocked out on the canvas and asked who was the subject. "*Que sé yo?*" shrugged the frocked artist (who, we suppose, had special permission to speak). "If it comes out with a beard, *San Antón;* if not, *La Purísima Concepción.*" Looking over the great number of canvases falling to shreds on the humid church wall, and the dull ugliness of most of the saints depicted, one regrets that so many of them grew a beard in the course of the work. The Virgins are often insipid, but the male heads are more often repulsive.

The stalls, both of the lay brothers' *coro* and the priests', long ago disappeared; they were taken to Madrid about 1887, shortly after the state purchased the monastery, and placed in San Francisco el Grande, and it goes without saying that the immense silver *brasero* which used to stand before the prior's seat has followed them. This, we are told, was a gift to the monastery from one William Godofin (Godolphin), English ambassador to the court of Castile, who lost his title to nobility in England for having turned Catholic, but who received a far grander title from the Spanish monarch, Philip IV; the crime of one land being the virtue of the other. The two works of art the church still possesses it owes to the defiant qualities of stone and iron—the alabaster *retablo mayor* and

the iron *reja* which separates the space reserved for the villagers from that of the lay brothers. The *reja*, or grille, recalls that made by the same great ironsmith, Fray Francisco de Salamanca, for the church at Guadalupe.

Of the *retablo* Baedecker tells us, quoting no doubt some authority who had consulted the convent archives, that "The earliest and largest work of sculpture imported from Italy into Castile (about 1490) is the marble retablo of the Cartuja of El Paular. This work, executed in Genoa to the order of John II, includes fifty-six groups and thirty-three statuettes." Other writers repeat the story, adding that it cost the king eighty-thousand ducats to bring his kingly gift from Genoa to the foot of the Peñalara. The eye however does not instantly second the documents. One is disturbed by suggestions not of some other atelier in Italy than Genoa, but of one in Spain itself. The Paular retable in fact bears very close kinship to the great gilded retable in the Cartuja de Miraflores, near Burgos. This Carthusian monastery was also a pet of this same John II. Now the Burgos piece was begun in 1486, presumably in Burgos, by the native son Gil de Siloe, who learnt his art in the vigorous Gothic school created right there in Burgos by the numerous Flemings and Germans who had flocked into Castile as a result of

close political and trade relations between Spain and the Lowlands. This school flourished all through the fifteenth century and even later; it kept a tinge of Gothic long after Genoa and all Italy had passed the climax of the Renaissance. Now the so-called Ligurian product in Paular has even more than a tinge of the old Gothic style, and it is high time some competent critic thrashed out the matter. We are bound to suppose that the archives were rightly kept; yet there is something mysterious about this port of Genoa. At this very moment I am impatiently awaiting a suit ordered long ago, which the Madrid tailor assures me will be of the very best English cloth; but every time I clamor for a fitting he explains that the cloth has not yet left Genoa!

Numerous chapels, a sacristy and ante-sacristy were added to Abderrhaman's simple Gothic church; its single apse was swamped under Baroque hexagons and octagons. The sacristies are full of gilded baubles; brocade altar cloths and thick Spanish carpets lie rotting in the damp and dust, a sorry ending for what had aimed to be so fine. The Baroque purse was bursting; the monks had to erect a *tabernaculo* behind the High Altar. This the good Quadrado indignantly labels as a veritable scandal in art. It consists of two polygonal chambers, barbaric, overloaded, coarse. It seems as if it was reserved for the Carthusians, who

had taken the vow of silence, to scream loudest in their art. How to describe the tortuous forms of heavily gilded carvings and the mosaics of colored marbles which these two small chambers of the tabernacle contain! Against each of the eight sides of the larger is set a bumpy gold altar, and in the small space left in the centre rises a lofty baldachin on twisted columns running up into the cupola. Under the baldachin stands a Grecian *tempietto*, and this once held an enormous silver custodia which Pons says was as bad as the worst the place contained; further, to provide the precious metal for it a magnificent Gothic custodia was melted down. What bits of wall were left visible in the octagon and cupola were painted by Palomino, another Baroque painter who like Carducho stood in high favor with monks and monarchs. Less choked up is the adjacent polygon, but its ornament is even coarser—highly-colored colossal saints and angels of Barclay Street style, poised above shiny altars, all restless, all theatrical, all dripping gold, all giving a portentous idea of the kind and quantity of rubbish that these servants of the lowly Nazarene had accumulated on the eve of their disbandment. Nor did the seventeenth-century cenobites who so lavishly patronized the gaudy Baroque school have the excuse of the newly rich with whom nowadays we associate unbridled osten-

tation. The friars (we forbear referring to their vow of poverty) had been handling wealth, and great wealth, for centuries.

After the tabernacle, the homely honest kitchens of the monastery are a grateful sight. Presses, grinding-stones, chopping-blocks, oil-jars, are still in place; the long-handled scoop still protrudes from the baker's oven. Maybe even a petrified loaf like the Pompeian is waiting to be drawn out. This big outer kitchen where all the more menial culinary work was done is separated from the refectory by another with a capacious fire-place to one side and a lofty ventilator in the centre, like that of the canons' kitchen at Pamplona. Ventilator and vault offer a neat piece of brickwork to a knowing eye, but the average organ is more interested in focusing the tiny patch of blue visible through the high-up aperture. Stripped bare of every accessory, the pantries opening from it fallen into heaps of débris, this spot brings a pang to a domestic soul. How much less sacrilegious it would have been to dismantle the vulgar *tabernaculo* and leave the honest kitchens intact—rows of bright copper pots and pans against the whitewashed walls, glazed earthern jars of savoury herbs on the shelves, blue and white Segovian plates in the tile-lined cupboards, and a thousand and one obsolete culinary devices in their appointed places. But obviously this

could not be! The looters, it is to be presumed, were the villagers, and these had too much sound sense to take a gilded simpering saint instead of a decent self-respecting saucepan. To see the old kitchen restored would be a joy to us from whose cramped homes this unit has almost disappeared; but no archæology-saturated restorer would deign to dedicate his lofty talents to such a mean and commonplace rehabilitation.

The care-taker, who lives in the guests' patio under the belfry (and who spurned us until we claimed friendship with Don Enrique de Mesa, the poet of El Paular), gave us an insight into the restoring architect's *modus operandi*. It was not until rain was pouring into the gaping church roof, and vaults were falling everywhere that the State could be prevailed upon to reclaim El Paular. But the architect sent to arrest the imminent disintegration decided that the prime necessity was to hie himself to pleasant Alicante on the Mediterranean and procure a certain stone peculiar to that region, have it carved there for a cornice for the church, and then laboriously hauled on ox-carts to Paular; by which time he had used up the slender appropriation accorded him. There the work of reclaiming stopped short, and his carved blocks lay for years on the ground.

Another government architect now has the matter

in hand; some of the blocks are lifted into place; the church has a new shiny lead roof; the belfry steeple, which long ago was struck by lightning and had toppled over into the sacristy, has been dug out of the mess, and the sacristy roof has been ceiled in. Less necessary we should say was the painting of the cloister vaulting—a bright yellow. As for the rest, kitchens, refectory, library, and cells, the State does not own them. From the private purchaser of 1840, after the Disestablishment Act, it acquired only the church and the four vaulted walks of the cloister; and as the descendants of that purchaser have no use for cells or kitchens, these must be left to fall although they are in fact an integral part of the monastic fabric. "But what can we do?" the Spaniard asks desperately. "So many beautiful architectural monuments to care for would embarrass even a richer state than Spain." He is right, no doubt; yet Paular is a case of spoiling the ship for a h'a'p'orth of tar. A very little more money would have bought the cells and kitchens as well, and a little good will would have invited the Carthusians back. Not to restore them their once vast tracts of land and their feudal lordship, but to concede to them the privilege of going on voiceless if they wished, and manufacturing meanwhile the excellent paper for which they were famous, or the delicious Chartreuse liqueur whose

secret they alone possess. This would have been one way of prolonging the life of an historic monument, and without expense to the state.

One of our party, Don Manuel, had first come to Paular in 1883 while it was still private property with administrator and farm hands on the premises. After the church and cloister were bought as a *Monumento Nacional*, years elapsed before the government appointed a guardian. When tardily he assumed office all was disorder and litter. The monks had walked out, leaving their altars spread, lamps trimmed, books on shelves, correspondence and expense-accounts in neatly tied little packets, and but little had been disturbed by the first purchaser. But during the subsequent period of neglect the wind that came in through gaping roofs sent letters and leaves of old books scurrying through the corridors. Don Manuel still treasures a yellowed cramped bit of writing he picked out of the lilac branches one spring day—a letter from a monk who had gone to the branch house in Granada to his old companion in Paular, giving him a remedy for colic. The date is 1690. "We who have not the good fortune to pass the long summer among the cool healthy pines of El Paular," writes the Carthusian from Andalusia, "frequently suffer from *dolores cólicos*. We apply the following remedy which, with God's help, never fails

to bring relief—." And here begin the boiling of herbs and grinding of coral and other beneficent substances which made up the antique pharmacopœia.

To-day not a book nor paper can be found. The farthest corner is denuded and bare. In the monks' cells the flooring has been torn up and the staircase torn down. Staircase? Yes, for every Carthusian cell was a miniature duplex apartment. So small indeed that its cubic content could hardly bring more than three thousand dollars a year in New York to-day! The general living room was walled off so as to form a spacious inglenook around the large open fire, and here the white-robed *fraile* could read (or doze?) free from draughts, his book shelves handy at each side of the hooded chimney, and a bracket worked in the plaster to hold his candle. In fact his abode was literally a combination of the cloister and the hearth. From this same nook a window opened into the lilac cloister, and on its broad blue-tiled ledge the silent occupant could lean and gaze into his future grave. Over the nook and looking down into the general room through three arched openings was the chamber, its staircase supported on a fine brick arch. The *fraile's* garden was high-walled, thus sparing him the unholy human temptation to bid his neighbor the time o' day; and each garden had its own water supply brought in stout earthen tubes laid clumsily against

THE MONASTERY OF EL PAULAR SET AGAINST THE PICO DE PEÑALARA (7890 FEET)
The Monks' Trout-pond



THE MONASTERY OF EL PAULAR SET AGAINST THE PICO DE PEÑALARA (7890 FEET)
The Monks' Trout-pond



Photograph by Wunderlich

A SHRINE NEAR SEGOVIA ON THE ROAD TO EL PAULAR

the wall. Those who have visited the so-called cell of Chopin and Georges Sand at Valldemosa will recall this characteristic Carthusian arrangement of *maisonette* with its own plot of ground. Not precisely the rigors of the earlier cenobitism; we suppose that such amenities as fireplaces and board flooring did not come till the period of relaxation, and we find that precisely because the cell represents relaxation, the weakness of our common flesh, it touches our human sympathies deeper. Though we are "not by nature of monk's kin," our hearts go out to the white-garbed silent individual who was so ruthlessly evicted in 1835 from his comfortable little bachelor home.

In the early seventeenth century Vicente Carducho, the fashionable classic painter, was employed by the monks of El Paular to paint fifty-six large frescos in the cloister. The subject was the life of Saint Bruno, founder of the Order. Our friends tell us these were removed by the government to Madrid (and later to Coruña) but that until recently the rich gold frames that held them were still in place. Though we have not seen the paintings in question, we mention them because of the paragraph Don Antonio Pons dedicates to the matter in his *Viaje de España.* Pons had good taste and good sense. In an age still addicted to a hollow imitation of classic he was old-fashioned

enough to announce his preference for earlier and sincerer periods. In Christian art at least he wanted what was begotten of Christianity. Unable to admire the cold academic perfections of Carducho, he flattered the abbot by finding a pretty *raison d'être* for them. "A great sacrifice does a man make," he wrote, "when he gives up his liberty and submits to another's will; but even a greater sacrifice, one almost beyond human power, when he deprives himself of the society of his kin and determines to live apart and guard a silence little short of perpetual, for he opens his mouth only to sing the praise of the Lord. Such privation appears insupportable and incompatible with human nature. The *Padres Cartuxos* of El Paular have found a mitigation of this hard life and one still within the rigor of their rule, in the sight of pretended human beings; they get recreation for their souls in the lively action of painted scenes." Thus was the good Pons kindly to his hosts who had strayed into the abhorred realms of modern fresco painting, and non-committal to the painter he could not honestly admire. Carducho was by no means the worst painter of his perfunctory age; and we hope his scenes of the life of Saint Bruno were not repulsive like his Carthusian martyrs which make the cloisters of the Granada monastery unpleasant to pass through; but good or bad, we are glad his decorations are gone from El Paular. It needs no

other coloring than the pale tints of the lilac blossoms, and the rich sad green of cypress and boxwood.

As further compliment to our friend the previously mentioned poet of Paular, the custodian threw open the gates of the *frailes' huerta* or orchard for us. I fancy that those who do not know the poet might accomplish the same result by transfer of some "coin o' the realm." Nor would they regret the price. The *huerta* is vast—"twice five miles of fertile ground with walls and towers girded round," but the sheer wall is softened in aspect by a heavy mantle of ivy and bittersweet and clematis. Its cardinal avenues cross in a *rond pont* featured with inviting benches in the lee of magnificent elms and oaks; but this is not the best of the *huerta;* off to the right, beyond fruit orchards and plots bursting with succulent vegetables are the trout-breeding ponds, and across them is the best view to be had of the church, apse-end, but with the ugly bulge of the tabernacle lost; all magnificent against the undulating snow line of the Peñalara, and the picture, with stately storks sailing above to their home on the belfry, is perfectly reflected in the still water. If the custodian be favorably impressed with his visitors he will let them linger here, which is far more satisfactory than strolling through at his heels; whatever espionage is necessary being done by the blue-smocked peasants who now

cultivate the land for other consumers than the white-garbed disciples of Saint Bruno.

Across the road is another *finca*—the abbot's *casa de recreo*, more delightful in that it is more sylvan, with the little Lozoya scampering musically through it. This too is private property. The owner, a Madrid doctor, has not returned to it since the death of his wife and only son some years ago; but Señorita A, who knew them well and had spent many a trout-fishing season there in the master's happier days, took us over and introduced us to Juana, his housekeeper. Juana and her husband, kindly and courteous like all their class, invited us to enter at will, and showed us the old mill where the monks made their paper, with the big presses still in place. Paper for the first edition of "Don Quixote," they say, was made right there by the monks in the house beyond the stone bridge.

With another of the party I outstayed the rest at El Paular. One dawn, a week after they had left on their tramp to Cercedilla, Justa rose and unlocked the gate for us in the bright crisp moonlight of three A.M. and we walked out to Rascafría to catch the four-o'clock mail-cart. Our adieus were the merest whisper, for the sanctity of the hour and the place forbade speech. Once out on the road I cast many a glance back at the moon-bathed old pile rising above

the long wall of the *huerta*. Buried away there in the Guadarramas it had given me generously of that mystic calm which we rightly associate with such retreats. A thousand pities it could not have been saved out of the wholesale monastic wreckage!

Back here in Madrid they tell me that when the French refugees came into Spain, those who distil the famous nectar which bears the name of the Order, they examined El Paular with a view to establishing their industry there, but pronounced the buildings irreclaimable, and went instead to Tarragona on the Mediterranean. The Alpinistas who loved the old place were in despair; and in still deeper despair when the State, having purchased it, lay supine before the task of restoration. In bitterness, they proposed that a subscription should be raised for its mortuary stone. On this was to be written "These are the last remains of the ancient Cartuja de Santa María del Paular which the Spanish Government took out of private hands in order to have the glory of letting it collapse under State neglect."

As we have seen, the State acted before the moment of utter ruin and has saved, if not a whole monastery, at least a mountain cloister rich in lilac perfume, and cypresses, and immortal green twilight, and peace.

V

NUESTRA SEÑORA DE GUADALUPE

V

NUESTRA SEÑORA DE GUADALUPE

BEST visited from Oropesa on the Madrid-Lisbon railroad. This pueblo now has an inn and from this inn there is motor service direct to the convent gate.

In case the motor-bus be out of commission it might be useful to know that the old mail-coach will take its place. It starts from Oropesa about three A.M. for San Vicente, changing horses at Puente del Arzobispo; from the Pass of San Vicente a small cart or *tartana* continues to the monastery. The goal is not reached till nine o'clock but the reward is a good Franciscan supper and a good bed, for the monastery itself offers an excellent inn to men and women. In the pueblo is a primitive *parador* that men might tolerate.

Motorists will find the road good all the way from Madrid via Oropesa, a distance of about two hundred and fifty kilometres, or from Toledo via Talavera de la Reina.

Our Lady of Guadalupe is the renowned miracle shrine of Estremadura. It lies far off in the Sierra de Villuercas due east from Cáceres and due south from Oropesa. From this province of Estremadura went forth the Conquistadores of the early sixteenth

century to seek adventure in the New World, and thus Guadalupe in Estremadura is in a sense godmother to Guadalupe in Mexico.

We, on our first visit, expected to start out from the former town, using it also as base for an excursion to the famous Roman bridge of Alcantara. To get to the bridge was easy enough, they assured us. The train went straight to Arroyo and the daily mail-coach did the rest; but Guadalupe was quite another matter. Nobody knew from what point the monastery received its mail; the only certain thing was that the motor ran daily to Trujillo (whence Pizarro set out to conquer Peru) and from there perhaps a smaller motor to Logrosán; if not, surely a *tartana* or a mule would be available. Beyond Logrosán no one could promise anything. The innkeeper at Cáceres held out hopes for a conveyance in the month of September when the fiesta of Our Lady of Guadalupe befell; returning pilgrims, he said, had stopped at his inn only the year before. We were in late March and the wait seemed rather long.

"And you never asked them about the journey?"

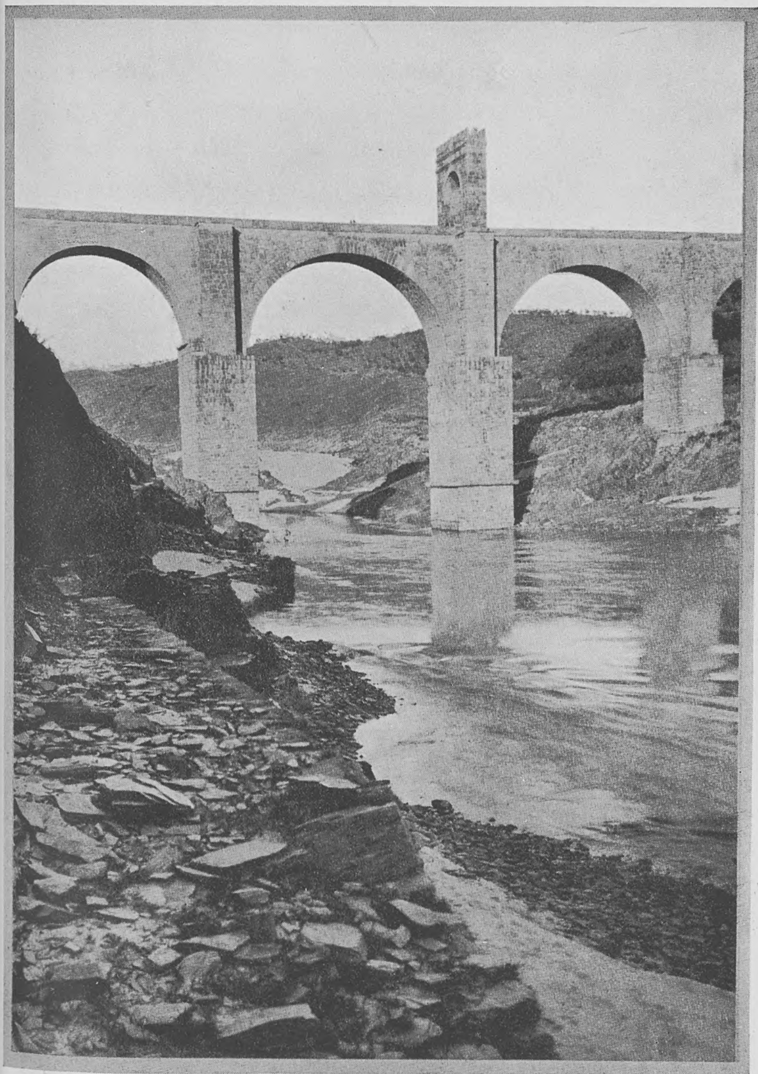
"No, señora, why should I? I shall never go in pilgrimage."

Since those days the roads have been put in order (though the Cáceres inn-keeper is probably unaware of it), and motorists will find the stretch

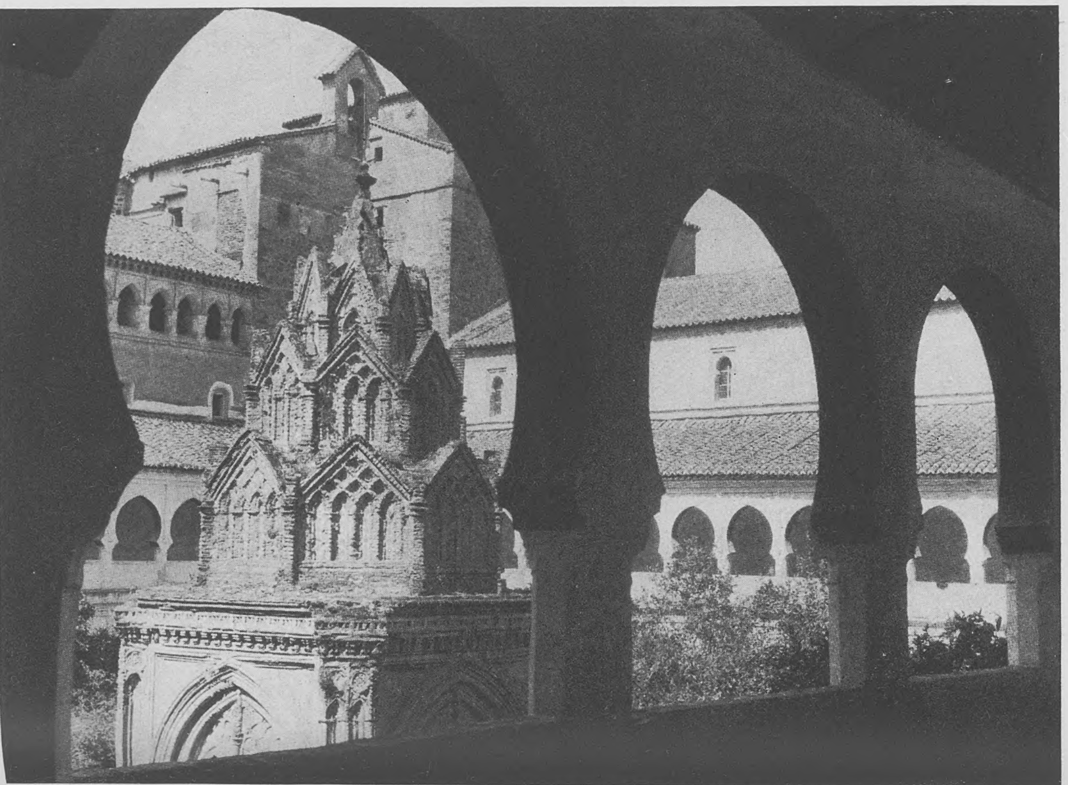
between Guadalupe and Logrosán quite tolerable. Until this recent mending of Spanish highways, however, the guide book sold in the monastery itself—once one managed to get there—giving a choice of half a dozen routes "all comfortable" was somewhat exasperating. "At Logrosán," it supposes optimistically "a conveyance could surely be found." Logrosán is poor of inn but rich in pride, for it gave birth in 1616 (we again quote the guide) to the illustrious Doctor Soropán who wrote *Spanish Medicine in Verse!* Distances the guide spurns as too material a detail; likewise it fails to warn one to take food along. Richard Ford does better by his readers: "All who ride through the Peninsula," he predicts, "will read thirst in the arid plains and hunger in the soil-denuded hills, where those who ask for bread will receive a stone. . .A prudent traveller will therefore victual himself for three days." But the guide, instead of this very practical warning, offers a hope. "In February of this year of 1912 work will be begun on the Cáceres-Guadalupe Railroad. The line will be finished in two years and will greatly facilitate the visit to the monastery from the west and southwest of the Peninsula." Trustful author! In this year of 1926 the Cáceres-Guadalupe Railroad is as much of a fiction as the navigation of the Tagus, the project for which was approved and signed by Philip II in 1581.

In any case the Oropesa route is the best, so we will spare the visitor the other *itinerarios* offered by the guide. Under this heading, however, there is one closing sentence whose pathos appeals to those who know Spain: "While the above itineraries are *commodious enough*, it is a pity that this important monastery should not be even more accessible. This is because of the neglect and abandonment in which Spain leaves her monuments. In any other land a railroad would have been specially built to a site so fertile and of so much natural and historic grandeur." Ford, who knew and loved Estremadura, likewise lamented that this, "the granary under the Romans and Moors should have been abandoned by the Madrid government to *ferae naturae*, wandering sheep, swine and locusts."

My own party, discouraged from venturing across the mountains to Guadalupe, decided to return on the Madrid line as far as Oropesa and set out from there. Hard travel it proved, but that was not all the fault of Guadalupe. Finding ourselves in this region we had to see the great Roman Bridge of Alcántara, which meant leaving the train at Arroyo de Malpartida and driving to Arroyo del Puerco where there is an inn to spend the night; coming back early next morning to Malpartida to catch the seven o'clock mail-coach for Alcántara. *Puerco* (of the pig) is indeed



THE MIGHTY ROMAN BRIDGE AT ALCÁNTARA, BUILT 105 A.D.



THROUGH THE HORSESHOE-ARCHED UPPER ARCADE AT GUADALUPE

puerco, but in a back street stands the house of Señorita Petra Ojalbe and her blind sister, whose neatly printed little card "begs to inform you that they are carrying on the well known and justly famed inn of their late father." Quiet, convent-like, clean, but a bit too delicate as to food. The middle-aged Petra with flattering tongue told me that an American lady had stopped there once before, of even fairer skin than mine, so she concluded that we must all have some Spanish blood in us to be so far removed from the black Indian.

The drive to the Roman bridge takes nearly all day. Fortunately the *fonda* is *simpatica*. "Cándida Mola, widow of Hilario Gudín," says the sign over the door. Cándida has charming manners. Her kitchen is adorable—a tiled stove in the centre with open ovens on all four sides and a huge hooded chimney above, hung with savoury Estremeñan hams; on the whitewashed walls hang dozens of rosy old copper utensils that would make the fortune of one of our lady decorators who place these culinary objects in American drawing-rooms.

And the Roman bridge? Of all mighty bridges of all times it is easily monarch; an imperishable gift bestowed by the Emperor Trajan on his native Spain. Alone in that desolate region, without the companionship of glorious forums and amphitheatres and triumphal arches, without the compensation of attract-

ing thousands of admiring eyes each year, this silent witness of the grandeur that was Rome still fights the tumultuous Tagus. In vain do the seething waters of the spring freshets seek to undermine its colossal unmortared piers. And for whom does it work today? Neither proud imperial legions nor the humble husbandmen of the district cross it; there is no traffic with the bald sterile bluffs on the Portuguese side. Farther south at Medellin, where the intrepid conqueror of Mexico was born, there is another mighty old bridge fit to bear the armies of the world.

"Does anyone ever use this bridge?" we asked.

"Si señora, every day," a lad hastened to assure us. "You see that little white house on the far side? Our electric light plant; the electrician lives on this side, and every day he crosses over to his work."

We scrambled down to water level, low in summer, to photograph the giant of Alcántara, and not without apologizing for daring to confine its majesty to a seven by nine plate; but these same dimensions seemed quite adequate to an English lady who was down there making a dainty little water color sketch *en passant* as it were, while her motor waited patiently above on the highroad.

Back at the Malpartido station at ten P.M. that night, the *correo* (mail-train) from Lisbon came in

crowded to three times its capacity. Mortally tired from the long drive we had to stand for four hours in the corridor and watch out besides for the insignificant station of Oropesa. Tumbled out finally on to its chilly platform, I went directly to the *pareja* standing under the station lamps (the pair of Civil Guards without whose watchful presence no mail-train enters or leaves a Spanish station).

"Does the mail-coach start to-morrow for Guadalupe?"

"It leaves this minute," was the unexpected reply, but it goes only as far as the Puerto; maybe you can get mules there, or a carrillo (cart)."

"And what is the distance between El Puerto and the monastery?"

"Another forty kilometres."

Sleepy, shivering, tired, the flesh was weak. There stood the mail-train ready to carry us on to Madrid and comfort. But the spirit triumphed and we suffered ourselves to be led across the road to the Parador de la Estacion where they were hitching up six horses for the journey. With other prospective passengers we took a cup of hot coffee made by the women folks, all up and stirring. Then off in the raw darkness, the wiser Spanish travellers wrapped, head and all, in their *mantas* (blankets). At Puente, and still in the dark, we changed to a smaller *coche;*

and while this was being prepared we waited in a kitchen beside a big crackling fire of olive wood and drank more coffee. Only two of the wrapped and muffled figures continued, and wrapped, muffled, and sleeping, they remained until about ten o'clock when the sun had taken the iciness out of the mountain air. Not until they had fully emerged from their blankets did we discover that one of them was a woman. She brought out a half yard of bright yellow sausage, and he a huge loaf which they divided between them; on our being invited to join it required some force of character to answer with the expected, No, thank you. We had brought no provisions, and the nipping air from the snow-capped sierra we were climbing sharpened our hunger. If only we had thought to fill our scrip with bread and chocolate three days before in Cáceres. Finally, at Estrella, we had a moment to buy a roll apiece, but got nothing else till the Puerto, or pass was reached. Here the postman's mother spared us an egg each. I gave her some tea to infuse, but as she used a half-washed coffee pot for the operation the beverage hardly brought the cheer sung by the poet.

From the Puerto on we had seats in the Guadalupe postman's cramped little cart. The young man too; the girl had mounted a waiting burro and gone off to a near-by pueblo. His name, he said, was Angel

Panyagua (Angel Bread-and-water) "to serve us and God," and he was a *guardia de seguridad* (the national police on duty in large towns). Having just returned from two months' duty in Barcelona during the strikes, he wished before entering into general conversation to register his hatred of the Catalans. Besides dozens of other defects of character, they were supremely selfish. Did they not wish to separate and leave the rest of Spain to shift for herself without the large proportion of national taxes Catalonia contributed? We dared to suggest that in view of the remarkable economic effort the Catalans had made since the Cuban War defeat it was natural they should demand a better government, but he argued that if God chose to curse Spain with eternal misrule it was Catalonia's duty to grin and bear it with the rest of them.

After his arduous duties in refractory Barcelona our *guardia* had been given a short furlough, and was on his way back to his native hamlet to marry. Nine years his *novia* had been waiting for him to earn more and much more than the two daily pesetas which carpentering in the village used to bring him in the days of their courtship.

"Is the pay of a Madrid policeman so good, then?" I innocently asked.

No, it was pitiably small, and he had to buy his own

uniform besides; but, as he unblushingly explained, he knew how to *sacar la perra*, or turn an honest penny, on every arrest he made. Never did he set an unlicensed vender free, for instance, for less than fifty pesetas cash. Besides, being on duty only four hours out of twenty-four, a policeman had time to pursue some other calling. He himself had secured the janitorship of a new tenement house to which he would take his bride, and where he would live rent free, levying tribute from innocent tenants as well as from guilty law-breakers.

And so the long hungry day wore on, diverting enough. All along the ledge both north and south of the Puerto we kept passing picturesque cattle drovers, the Estremenian type whose every detail of dress had been bequeathed to our own cowboys. Night fell some two hours before the drive ended, leaving the full beauty of the Guadalupe Valley to be appreciated next morning. From the Pass downward, the scenery was magnificent; bold peaks above, richly cultivated slopes below, an ebullient mountain stream making a music that is rare in arid Spain and flashing back the moonbeams it caught between the tall eucalyptus trees. Every step forward convinced us that daylight would reveal even more loveliness. And all the while the air, instead of growing chillier as it had a right to do on a March night, grew balmier, *muy templado*,

as our driver-postman said. The fact is that the range we had just crossed, with a height of 5500 feet, shelters Guadalupe from those icy winds that make Salamanca and all north of the Tagus so raw in winter and spring. No better illustration of the mildness and fertility of the southern slopes could be submitted than the following pompous paragraph from a history published in 1597 by the Guadalupe monk-priest Father Talavera:

> We have here the fragrant quince, pomegranate, fig, pear, apple, plum, and olive; here the victor's laurel and palm. The chestnut trees are grand, the oaks mighty; and the soil at the same time produces oranges and lemons, peaches, filberts, walnuts, almonds . . . passing over in silence a multitude of other trees and plants, as well as the thousand medicinal herbs and fragrant flowers which these copious waters nourish in order to gladden the eye and heart of man.

The copious waters referred to are more than those of the little Guadalupe. (The Arab name, Wolf River, has not lost its pertinency; winter wolves are still plentiful, and the sheep dogs in Guadalupe are provided with iron-spiked collars). A century before Padre Talavera wrote, a prior of the monastery had brought a more abundant supply of water from a spring five miles away through many tunnels and conduits difficult to construct, "probably the greatest

hydraulic undertaking since the days of the Romans," as Don Elias Tormó observes (we hope without too much exaggeration) in his monograph on the monastery. We in our moonlight drive beside the obstreperous little Guadalupe knew nothing of still more abundant waters hidden in tunnels and conduits, so were quite satisfied with what we had at hand; while the soft fragrance of a few early fruit blossoms and the victor's laurel, and the dark mass of the mighty oaks and grand chestnuts, filled us with pleasant expectation.

Tired and stiff we were when the cart drew up finally before the sombre turreted pile called the Monasterio de Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe. Yet we could not descend until the driver, who had mail for the monks, had taken in our cards and secured the prior's approval. Should he refuse us, on to the awful *parador;* but the monks were in receptive mood; after much waiting, we were invited to pass through the portal. At last we could count the long journey, which had begun when we left Alcántara the afternoon before, at an end.

Morning showed that the guest rooms, to which the prior himself had kindly lighted us, faced full south and were at a height of five or six stories above the street; or rather above the irregularly-shaped village

plaza with its low arcaded houses and splashing fountain. Down there where the inhabitants shared their abode with the pig, like all true Estremeñans, Gallegos, and Irish, the typical odors of a Spanish pueblo prevailed; but up on our balcony only the spring freshness penetrated. The town was highly picturesque, the view beyond, glorious. Just to stand there was worth the long trip. We had slept well—good beds, fine airy rooms, decent in all details. How thankful we were that the monks had devoted this part of their abode to a hostelry instead of leaving pious pilgrims and profane art-lovers to the tender mercies of the village *parador*.

In thus offering hospitality within their own walls the monks are merely continuing an ancient Guadalupe tradition. In better spirit, however; for centuries ago, when hundreds and hundreds used to flock to the shrine, the convent alone claimed the right to receive payment for lodging them. The villagers were prohibited from doing so. More, they had to put their houses at the disposal of the cowled monopolists should the overflow of pilgrims demand it. Now that this unique privilege of the monastery no longer exists, Guadalupe has a *parador* (one degree less in elegance than a *posada*). It is of the sort acceptable to horse-dealers and olive-oil buyers who pass that way, or to any hardy male excursionist;

but *gente gorda* (fat folk, or more euphemistically rendered, affluent tourists) put up at the monastery and pay at least what so good an inn is worth, say fifteen pesetas a day, and as much more as generosity prompts.

The *chica*, or maid employed to wait on guests, is one of the best-trained servants in Spain (which I mean as a reflection on the average Spanish mistress); and the *hermano-cocinero* or monk-cook, a veritable *cordon bleu.* "With the few elements obtainable in this remote spot I do my best," said he modestly when we praised him; "but our supplies are very limited, especially meat. Last year there was so little rain that for lack of pasture the ill-nourished ewes and cows had to be sold to the butcher before they could calve. Only the hardy pig survived. In the Middle Ages," and here he smiled slyly, "our larders were better supplied. They used to say *Mejor que Conde o Duque, ser fraile de Guadalupe.*" (For good living better be a monk in Guadalupe than a count or a duke). The Spanish cenoby, then, must have outvied the English as described in that most ancient of English poems, *The Land of Cockaygne* (*i.e.*, coquina, the kitchen). In *The Land of Cockaygne* the monks lived in an abbey of pastries, the neighboring brooks ran wine, and the wild fowl flew through the air already dressed and roasted; to say nothing of a river

of sweet milk not far off, on whose banks stood a friendly nunnery. It is only fair to add that at Guadalupe we heard no hints of a nunnery, though the archives boast of its being the first monastery in Spain to support a foundling asylum.

Having lately read the description written by an Italian priest who was housed at Guadalupe in 1755–56 we can appreciate the poignant contrast that must have been in the *hermano cocinero's* mind when he referred to his "few poor ingredients." But before quoting from this Father Norberto Caimo let it be confessed that Spaniards used indignantly to denounce his publication as satire; and the patriotic Pons felt called upon to refute it by covering the same ground and publishing his own experiences, in the *Viage de España*, (1772). But Pons had to admit that regarding Guadalupe there was not much to correct, after all.

"The monastery consumes," wrote Padre Caimo, "three thousand sheep a year, fifteen hundred goats, one hundred beeves, one hundred and fifty hogs, three thousand arrobas (a measure of thirty-two pints) of olive oil, and twenty-eight thousand bushels of wheat." In those happy days this generous victualling was guaranteed by the monastery's own possessions in land and cattle. The monks owned eighty thousand head of sheep and three thousand cows,

with the privilege of free pasture far to the east and far to the west; in their olive groves were more than fifty thousand trees, while the rents collected from property farmed out to other planters amounted to eighty thousand ducats, say, fifty thousand dollars. Small wonder that our brown-garbed and sandalled Franciscan cook spoke disparagingly of the *pocos elementos* at his command.

But what did it matter that his ingredients were few! "Cooks, warriors, and authors must be judged by the effects they produce. Toothsome dishes, glorious victories, pleasant books," says one of our most delightful essayists. Well then, the *fraile's* least pretentious dish was toothsome. What an *arroz* (rice) baked in a deep brown earthern dish with cod fish, green peas, red pepper and golden safran! What a formidable *cocido* the day a large automobile party arrived from Madrid! The oval platter on which he sent it in must have measured three feet across—a colorful mosaic of *garbanzos* (chick peas) and spinach separated by a line of unctuous red *chorizo* or pork sausage, a border of little cubes of glistening bacon, while out at the platter's edge, radiating star-like, were the juicy ribs of the several sucklings sacrificed for the feast. The vegetarian would be hard put in a Spanish monastery. The chick peas and spinach are redolent of pig just as an

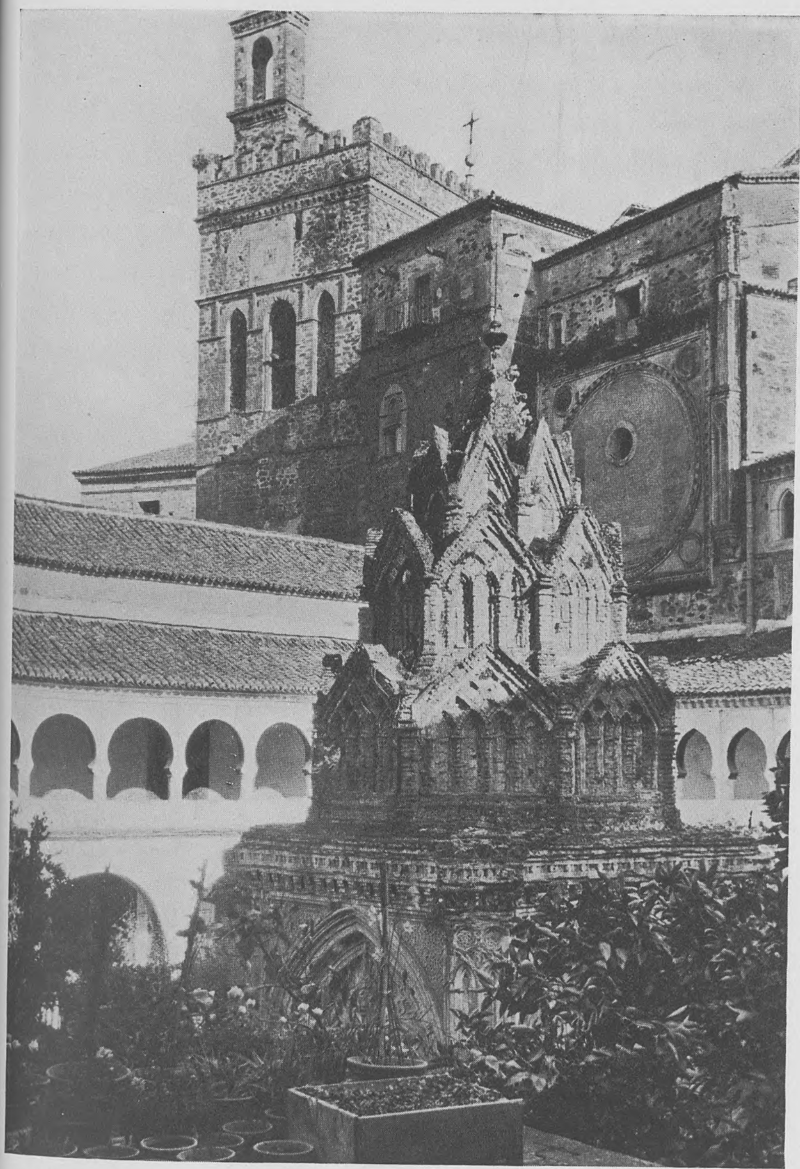
arroz is of cod, chicken, or chorizo; so he would have to limit himself to the good bread and honey, and eggs and wine and fruit in abundance. Our fraile was also an artist at *buñuelos* and *pica-tostes*, crisp and hot for breakfast. His coffee was excellent and, rarer still in Spain, hot. All this it will be seen is very different from Silos where the strictly cloistered Benedictines cannot receive women travellers and where there was only little Tomasa with her straw fire, her one frying-pan and nothing to fry in it, and her guest room over the pig-sty to lodge us in.

Not only in this matter of accommodation, but also in the aspect of the respective pueblos of Silos and Guadalupe is the difference in the rule and purpose of the two institutions instantly observed. The former pueblo, even during the long years when the monastery stood untenanted, could hardly have been more miserable and abandoned-looking; for the studious Benedictines when they came back straightway shut themselves up with all their precious learning within the convent walls. Their advent left no trace on the hamlet outside. The Franciscan community that came to Guadalupe, on the contrary, identified themselves at once with their neighbors near and far. They cleaned up the town (a little), opened a school, and a theatre, drilled a village band and a choir; in short they tried to revive the civili-

zation which their Hieronymite predecessors brought to this remote spot in the fourteenth century. All of which, like the maintaining of the hostelry, is the continuance of old tradition. The monks of St. Jerome, from the time the order was founded, were famous for their devotion to music and the drama, and here at Guadalupe in the seventeenth century they produced many a sacred piece by Cervantes, Góngora and others of the *Siglo de Oro*.

As is to be expected, modern methods of pedagogy have not penetrated the mountain fastnesses of Estremadura. Day after day one could hear the spelling-lesson droned out in concert over in the Gothic cloister; and once we came upon a class of squirming boys and girls of about seven enduring a fiery harangue from a young padre who kept reiterating that the Virgin had conceived without carnal contact. "Preparing them for confirmation," our conductor explained approvingly as we passed through.

No, not quite modern; yet, such as it is, Guadalupe has a school, thanks to the new monks, and so many other pueblos of its size have none. Did not a certain *marquesa* of a large Andalusian town tell us that after she had prevailed upon a few rich inhabitants to help her establish a school for the mentally deficient, the mothers of healthy normal boys, seeing



THE BRICK LAVATORY FROM THE UPPER GALLERY OF THE CLOISTER, GUADALUPE



A MORNING SCENE AT THE FOUNTAIN IN THE MONASTERY PLAZA, GUADALUPE

there was no provision made for their education, began knocking them over the head with a club in order to qualify them for the marquesa's special institution! Considering the general backwardness of Estremadura, Guadalupe makes a good showing. We had just come from Las Brozas, and Alcántara and Puerco, with their plazas too bare and squalid for words; and yet a Brozas native told me proudly that in his town there was much wealth—that the rich cattle raisers (*ganaderos*) had formed no less than five casinos, or clubs, all luxuriously appointed. Our Yankee lips refrained (for once) from asking if some of the casino money might not have been better spent on a school, or a clean and pretty plaza.

The plaza of Guadalupe was creditably clean; but more important to the artist eye was the glint of the sun on the big copper *cántaros* (kantharos) that the women were filling at the fountain and carrying off on the hip, one arm passed through the iron handle—quite different from the Cáceres way—unglazed earthen jars of classic shape carried on the head. The copper vessels used to-day in Guadalupe are identical with those made centuries ago when the monks first established their martinet or copper smithy whose operations, we read, had to cease each afternoon when the good friars were taking their siesta. (Ah! we sigh, if only modern Spanish nerves were as sensitive

to noise some effort might be made to suppress the day-and-night-long din in most Spanish towns). We stopped a small urchin in the street, going to fetch goat's milk, and read the inscription on his copper milk-jug: "Made by Pedro Ramos for his son Johnny, 1719." Little girls were playing house with miniature *cántaros* and brasiers of copper, and down alongside the stream these, as well as their mothers' larger copper pieces, were being scrubbed and polished for Holy Week.

After the hot coffee and fritters (or *churros*) which so agreeably surprised our first morning in the monastery, a handsome monk entered the dining-room and said he had come to escort us over the buildings. His card read PADRE JUAN YUSTE MONJE FRANCISCANO. Being a methodical person he gave us first a brief history of the foundation. The vast establishment owed its existence to the finding on that very spot of a miracle-working wooden image of the Virgin; or, as we had been reading in the Guide lying on the table, "to the clamorous miracles without number which She who is the nucleus of all and around whom all this beauty revolves, has been working for centuries." The story is the usual one of an image buried to protect it from sacrilegious Moors and dug up hundreds of years later at the instance of the interested party. In this

case it was a cowherd of Cáceres whom the Virgin lured to the spot through his losing one of his herd. For three days he wandered along the Guadalupe looking for the truant. Here, some hundred miles over the mountain he found her; but dead, as was to be expected, for she had gone at a livelier pace than the bovine tribe can support. The fourteenth-century cowherd, more practical than the modern Spaniard who resigns himself to a dead loss in every misfortune, decided to at least save her skin; but no sooner had he made the initial knife-thrust, a cross in the breast, than the beast arose, alive and mooing. Straightway the Virgin herself appeared before the amazed rustic and said: "Have no fear, I am the Mother of the Saviour." She then bade him lead his cow back to Cáceres and tell the clergy to come and dig in that very spot; there they would find her image and there they must build a shrine for it. This shrine she promised would become in time a grand temple on which she would shower protection and manifold riches. Then she disappeared.

Returned to Cáceres the cowherd found his wife weeping over the body of their little son, just deceased. The father supplicated Our Lady and, with that practical sense already noted, pointed out that if she would resuscitate the child when they were burying it, it would help the cow story for which, as

he aptly reminded her, he had no witness. His argument was reasonable, and worked the desired miracle. At the dramatic moment the dead child sat up and spoke. The priests, of whom, oddly enough, many and of great importance had assembled to bury this humble cow-keeper's child, stood transfixed. The father then proceeded to tell his adventures; the king on hearing them made him a *caballero*, Don Gil de Santa María de Guadalupe; and the ultimate result of the cow's inspired perambulations of the year 1320 was the monastery and town of Guadalupe.

This legend is the subject of no less than fourteen voluminous works. The authors were nearly all monks of the monastery, and prepared to vouch for its truth with their lives if need be; but the Italian monk Padre Caimo, who read all these works, qualified them as being "full of the Spanish emphasis;" but emphatic pabulum was ever dear to the native mind. To the Estremeñans Our Lady of Guadalupe is a divinity all their own, and her blackened image, the palladium of the whole province, and by extension, of all Mexico. By her intercession many miracles happened. Indeed the large cloister is hardly large enough to hold the many paintings that represent these. Chains fell from Christian captives off in Moslem Africa; all over Spain, difficult child-bearing was made easy, and sterility, (of which we

had never heard an instance in this prolific land), was overcome, though in its treatment, however, the records admit the additional help of certain rough sheep-skin shirts made by the monks and sold to the supplicants. Warriors were granted incredible victories, as when in 1340 a few hundred Christians with Our Lady of Guadalupe on their side put to rout thousands of Mohammedans at Algeciras, etc., etc.

This last-mentioned miracle was really the making of the place. For her timely aid at that battle Alfonso XI commanded that the little hermitage which sheltered the image should be replaced by a magnificent temple: henceforth it received the devotion of kings and with it princely gifts. No less than thirteen monarchs of Castile have visited the shrine, Ferdinand and Isabella making the pilgrimage eight times. From Aragon, from Portugal, from far-off Germany, kings and emperors have started out for this pleasant valley; victorious warriors too, laden with trophies—Don Juan of Austria with his splendid Arab lamp taken from the vanquished infidels at Lepanto; Hernan Cortés with golden images from the palace of the Montezumas in Mexico; Christopher Columbus, miraculously saved from shipwreck off the Azores, and Miguel Cervantes freed from the Moors of Algeria. The latter records his visit in *Los Trabajos de Persiles y Sigismundo* and pictures

his heroes as entering Guadalupe and "casting their eyes about, and seeming to see innumerable captives freed and flying there to hang their chains on the church wall."

We have said that this Estremeñan shrine gave origin to the adoration of Our Lady of Guadalupe in Mexico. The Spaniards who conquered that savage country were Estremeñans. What more natural than that they should find there a blackened wooden image and proceed to render it the same illimitable devotion that was traditional in their native province? Legend further links the two. A returning conquistador is supposed to have had a copy made of "La Mexicana" and brought it back to the original shrine; but although this is the story told, the Virgin in question is known to have been placed in its present situation above the prior's seat in 1499, years before the Aztec image was found.

The Virgin which the Cáceres cowherd found was at first confided to the keeping of a prior appointed by the Archbishop of Toledo, and twelve chaplains of the secular clergy, who built for it a modest hermitage. This regime lasted for about fifty years. The priors instituted an annual fair, *La Féria de la Virgin*, for September the eighth, which brought such prosperity that it turned the modest village into a real

commercial centre. But to the Guadalupe Fair, as to all scenes of buying and selling, flocked Jewish merchants in great numbers; in such ever-increasing numbers, in fact, that the plan of organizing a systematic inquest against the Jews in Spain is believed to have originated right here in the monastery in the year 1462. At any rate it was here in the plaza of Guadalupe that the Inquisition made its sanguinary début almost before it was legally established in Spain. If we are to believe the following letter, dated 1389, it was Jewish wealth that corrupted Guadalupe morals both within the monastery and without, hence the advice of Prior Serrano to his king, John I, to turn out the priests and to place the shrine in the keeping of monks of some regular order.

"Because as Your Highness knows, the clergy do not live chastely, being addicted to concubinage, which bad example those of the village follow, and because in the village there are many Jews, which Jews are those who possess most and thereby attract the Christians to go and live with them, all here are in a state of laxity and their lives are an affront to Our Lord God and His Holy Faith. Therefore, etc., etc."

With regard to the first statement of Father Serrano's rather illogical letter we can understand how the installing of monks instead of priests might be an improvement; for, as our legal friend Don

Tomás recently explained to us "Monks take a vow of chastity; priests, merely of celibacy; therefore *a priest has the same right to have illegitimate children as any other unmarried man.*" Although there is an ingenuous boast in the Guadalupe archives to the effect that the monastery maintained a foundling asylum over a century before Madrid possessed one, still we are willing to believe that the illegitimates decreased with the coming of the monks; but why should their advent have decreased the number of Jews? The fact is that Jews predominated in the town until turned out by the antisemitic policy of Ferdinand and Isabella, a policy forced upon the monarchs, it should be remembered, by popular clamor, instigated by the Christian preachers. One Jew even lived for thirty-six years as a monk in the convent itself, whence he was dragged forth and burned alive after confessing "by his own mouth and without being put on the rack, that he had never been baptized; that never had he consecrated the Host when saying Mass, not even when he was receiving a special fee; that he was circumcised; that he did not believe in the virginity of Our Lady the ever Virgin Mary; nor in the resurrection of the dead; and even more shocking things did he confess, namely: that he let the body of Christ (the sacramental wafer) fall on the floor when he was called

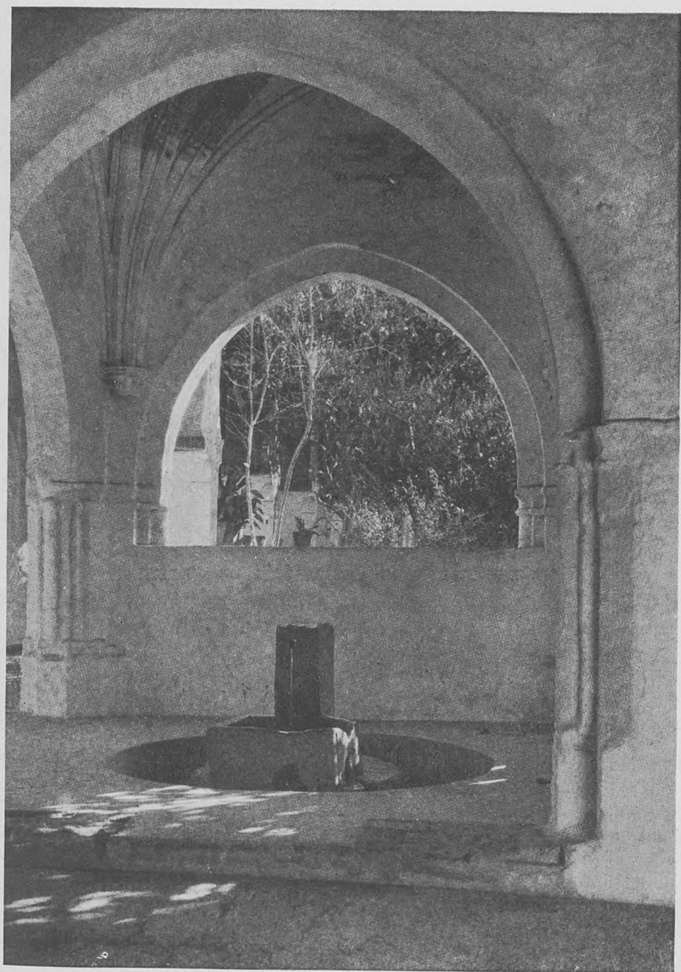
upon to administer communion; and that he revealed secrets of the confession." These enormities, we see, coincide almost word for word with the admission of guilt extorted a century before from the unlucky Knights Templars during the famous process held against them in France. Was the Guadalupe confession already prepared and written out in the monastery annals even before the Jew's trial began? Be that as it may, Fray Diego de Marchena, alias Jacob, was burned at the stake in 1485 there in the pretty plaza. As he had passed some forty years with the monks he must have insinuated himself into their midst a half century after Padre Serrano proposed to settle the Jewish question by installing a regular order of friars instead of the original canons as incumbents.

This tale of an unbeliever who for forty years outwardly practised an abhorred faith lends color to George Borrow's encounter with a certain Abarbanel on the Talavera highroad who told him of the Christian archbishop who was in reality "one of us," and of the four high church dignitaries who came to visit him annually on a certain feast day, when, the necessary precautions having been taken, they one and all "sat them on the ground and blasphemed heartily."

The monks came to Guadalupe in 1389. King John I, acting on Prior Serrano's advice, evicted the

seculars and invited the devotees of Saint Jerome, the newest of Spanish orders, to come from the mother house at Lupiana and guard the wooden image at Guadalupe. Thereupon the public notary called the villagers together in the plaza and told them the monarch's will: they were henceforth to give obedience and submission to the new Hieronymite abbot as legal lord of Guadalupe. The Hieronymites being a recently established and purely Spanish order, were aloof from the age-old jealousies between Franciscans and Dominicans, and hence specially suited to fill the difficult post of reformer. (For this same reason they were selected in the early sixteenth century to investigate the monstrous cruelties towards the Indians which Padre Las Casas came home from Cuba to thunder against.) During their tenure of Guadalupe we hear no more complaints against either conventual or village morality; and as it was from Guadalupe that the stern Philip II, who was most exacting (as to other men's conduct) summoned monks to people his new monastery of the Escorial, we may safely presume that their reputation was exemplary.

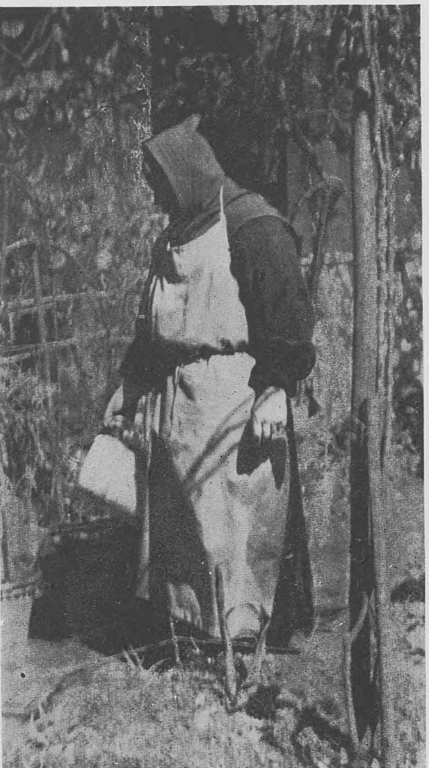
It is interesting to reflect that Father Serrano's advocacy of the friars as reformers came some thirty years after the religious influence of the orders had absolutely decayed in England. There as early as



SMALL LAVATORY AND TILED BASIN IN A CORNER OF THE CLOISTER, GUADALUPE



THE FRANCISCAN MONK, PADRE JUAN YUSTE
For three days he conducted us through the monastery



FRAY LUCIANO
Who keeps the cloister garth in order

GUADALUPE

1320 they had been attacked in a poem that had great vogue among the masses; and in 1362 the appearance of *Piers the Plowman* may be said to have finished their function as a factor in social uplift, for that naïve piece of unliterary, primitive English is nothing more nor less than a stirring protest against the hypocrisy and foul life of the friars in England. Henceforth the regular clergy dominated. Are we to conclude that the friars of Spain were on a higher moral level? Or is it that the clergy were on a still lower? Or is it that St. Jerome's following alone shone out as a star of virtue in a murky monastic sky? But this last speculation is unwarranted, for after all, Padre Serrano did not advise his sovereign to call in the Hieronymites to purify Guadalupe; he simply suggested "monks of some regular order." Clearly we must conclude that the monachal brand was superior in Spain.

The new ruling initiated Guadalupe's period of greatness. The Hieronymites, an order formed with the object of bringing the cult to a high degree of splendor, made the monastery into an extensive and noble pile; they acquired a just reputation in the arts and sciences; the image in their custody received priceless gifts. Then came the inevitable relaxation and disorder, terminating at last in the Disestablishment Act of 1835. Neglected and deserted save for

the guardianship of the parish priest and the villagers, Guadalupe's utter ruin seemed but a question of time; but fortunately about twenty years ago a group of Franciscans came to reclaim it (Padre Juan Yuste was one of them), and have already worked wonders. In this task they have been helped, and their interests protected in Madrid, by the magnates of the place, the Marqueses de la Romana, whose historic name is familiar to those who have read of Spain's struggle against Napoleon. To be sure, in 1879 the monastery had been declared a national monument, but that did not mean that the state undertook its restoration. The petty appropriation of three hundred dollars did not go very far in reclaiming a vast group of crumbling edifices. The Franciscans are doing that in proportion as they obtain funds. One source of income is the annual fair or pilgrimage, so well attended in spite of bad communications that it brings in alms alone over fifteen thousand pesetas a year. One may therefore hope to see the place thoroughly reclaimed in time.

Architecturally the monastery presents all the styles to be expected in a mass that kept on growing from the Romanesque-Gothic transition down to the Churrigueresque of the eighteenth century. The quality is most unequal. The only feature of the

church visible from outside is the entrance, a crude Gothic affair but with handsome bronze doors with biblical scenes in relief; the Oriental brickwork in the chimney of the northwest angle, besides being unusual, is an admirable Mudéjar bit; the various turrets and battlements would do credit to the best of military engineers—a touch of French mediævalism in their conical-topped towers. In the long façade of the guests' quarters, however, the builder missed a chance. But after all, fine architectural detail is not the consideration in a conglomerate mass like this flanked by a wild sierra; the question is, is it picturesque? and the answer, super-picturesque.

But its exterior effect Father Juan Yuste left us to find out for ourselves in our late afternoon walks. He began that first morning on the superb cloister, Guadalupe's lion. Romanesque and Gothic cloisters can be found any day, but here is something unique—a mixture of Moorish and Gothic. The builders were *Mudejares*, or conquered Moors living under Christian rule. They used their favorite material, brick, and coated it with stucco; and they gave the arcade their favorite form, the horseshoe,—two stories of spacious horseshoe arches in a European Christian monastery! And in the centre of the large cloister garden which to-day Brother Luciano keeps well trimmed, they erected a lofty *tempietto* to cover a hexagonal basin,

and this structure is in itself a gem among all monastery lavatories. Open on all sides, of Gothic bepinnacled silhouette, the bricks are partly revested with stucco carved and polychromed, and the walls further enlivened by colored tile insets. The lack of carving and painting in the cloister arcades heightens the rich effect of this Mudéjar wellhouse. One recalls Cairo, where in certain mosques the Gothic taken to the East by the Crusaders mingled with Oriental decoration in somewhat the same way. With a Cufic inscription instead of the sacred monogram that fills the window tracery the illusion would be complete.

A writer on art looking for something new to contribute to the Spanish wave now passing over our country might find a fertile theme in this Mudéjar phase peculiar to Spanish architecture. After the Mohammedan invasion even that small part of the Peninsula which remained Christian began to take on certain characteristics due to the Arab contact. The Silos carvings are an example, perhaps the destroyed dome as well. Later, when the Spaniards won back the important towns of the central plateau, large numbers of Mohammedan artizans (called *Mudejares*) remained to work for them, with the result that both civil and religious structures took on a distinct physiognomy. Toledo and Zaragoza are brick Mudéjar cities. In the fourteenth century, when the Order of

St. Jerome was founded, the Moors held only the little kingdom of Granada, but in Christian Spain Moors remained in large numbers. Abundant Mudéjar labor was obtainable, and at the same time the French mediæval tradition of religious architecture was weaker, and the infidels had a freer hand, so to speak. Lupiana, the mother house of the Hieronymites, was a Mudéjar structure, and its first cloister probably had the same brick horseshoe arches as Guadalupe and was equally devoid of stone carving; but it was remade in elaborate Plateresque in the early sixteenth century, and so far as I am aware no description or drawing of the primitive exists. How Guadalupe managed to escape the same remodelling, or rather complete rebuilding, is a marvel, considering how wealthy the institution became.

One does not realize at first glance what an admirable piece of construction this cloister is, because the bricks which were all finely moulded to the requirements of column, capital, and traceried parapet have been stuccoed, and later covered by repeated coats of whitewash. Those who admire beautiful Oriental brickwork *per se* may regret both the stucco and the formless whitewashing; but this Andalusian trick of whitening everything is, like the Andalusian manner of speaking, very attractive and therefore pardonable; even the most cultured class is addicted to

it. Certain it is that here in the Guadalupe cloister the white simplicity of the long row of wide-swung horseshoe arches is very appealing. The only other Spanish cloister with an Eastern arcade, the interlaced horseshoe arches of San Juan de Duero, is a ruin; the Guadalupe, complete and inhabited, is unique.

After the cloister had been duly inspected Padre Yuste conducted us to the church. Good serious Gothic, but much tampered with. The plan presented the peculiarity of a western as well as an eastern apse, the same arrangement as in Santo Tomás of Avila, and in the Escorial. But in the Guadalupe instance, not only did they thrust the nave out beyond the body of the church, but in the eighteenth century they also thrust the choir one bay forward into the body or nave; the interior is none the better for the compromise. The vaulting is elaborately ribbed and probably was much less assertive before it was gilded and outlined with a leaf design against the whitewashed masonry vault. For this decorative feat (stunt, one is tempted to say), we are indebted to Manuel Churriguera, who in the middle of the Baroque century had *carte blanche* with the interior. Baroque was a monastic passion, as we have observed at El Paular; and when one sees what excesses other abbots went to in other houses, one feels that Guadalupe came off comparatively well. To be sure the

spoiler amplified the choir to the detriment of the nave, and gilded the ribs and ripped out the beautiful stalls to replace them by "juicier" ones designed in the true Churriguera manner by his disciple Carnicero, but at least he left us the fine Gothic *reja*, iron being none too easy to rip out. It was made in the monastery smithy by the lay brothers themselves under the supervision of Fray Juan de Salamanca, a celebrated ironsmith whose work we have already seen at El Paular.

The monastery possesses a second church, a cold classic affair out of key with everything else within the precinct; hardly finished when it was left to fall to pieces. A descendant of Columbus, the Duke of Veragua, misspent more than fifty thousand ducats on it as an offering to the monks (about 1735). There is a second cloister too, and a very nice one, Gothic, but now much mutilated. It adjoins the infirmary, and the two having been rented out in tenements after the Disestablishment, they suffered accordingly. At present the noisy youngsters in the monastery school have the Gothic cloister as their playground.

What Padre Juan took most pride in showing off was the sacristy; a pearl beyond price, he said; and so, later, said the abbot. All monks seem still to live under the spell of Baroque. But even we who have other preferences in style must admit that the large

hall in question is superb; the most pleasing of all Spanish interpretations of the late Italian manner. It is said to have been planned as well as decorated by the illustrious painter Zurbarán. In it hang his portraits of the dead and gone priors. These paintings, executed in that monkish manner that made the Estremeñan artist so popular with the various religious orders, have, most of them, the unemotional smoothness of colored photography. In the composition, on the other hand, there is undeniable grandeur. Such sweeping style could not fail to please Zurbarán's cowled patrons. Modern critics, too; among these Don Elias Tormó, who says of the canvas which depicts Our Lord commending the mortifications of Abbot Salmerón: "Merely to look at the head of the priest makes one feel the touch of the Divine Hand that caresses it; this alone is worth a painter's journeying to Guadalupe."

Do we hear that waggish old Italian, Fra Norberto Caimo, ejaculate "Spanish exaggeration!"

At the end of three days of exploration, photography, and note-taking, Father John told us we had finished the architectural inspection of his monastery and that we would begin the following morning on the smaller works of art—the Virgin and her jewels, the illuminated books, and above all, the silk and velvet vestments. Of these last it is hardly an exaggeration

to say that they equal both artistically and intrinsically the much better known collection of Toledo Cathedral. Guadalupe, remote from long-established art-centres like Toledo and Seville, had to provide her own accessories, and these had to be numerous, costly, beautiful, for in no other way could the ecstatic devotion to the primitive-looking, blackened wooden image of Our Lady be expressed. The monks themselves had to be skilled artificers. What they produced had to compare favorably with the splendid gifts sent by sovereigns—the eighty-five massive silver church lamps, for instance, that figured in the inventory of 1622. Among its inmates Guadalupe had one of the most renowned silversmiths of his day, Fray Juan de Segovia, who completed the grand custodia and fashioned a regal salt-cellar for Ferdinand and Isabella when they came in homage after the fall of Baeza. Ornamental iron and bronze too were specially fostered in the fifteenth century, when Fray Juan Francés designed and cast the beautiful basin in the corner of the cloister; but after one unmerciful prior kept his frocked smiths so long at the forge that forty of them went on strike and walked out of the monastery in a body, the next prior had to call in outside talent; that explains why Fray Francisco de Salamanca, a Dominican, came to be author of the grille at the High Altar.

Printing was another art for which outside talent was invoked. One of the early Valencian printers was summoned to bring his press here into the far sierra and teach his newly-born process to the *frailes*. But of course long before the appearance of this modern device the Hieronymites of Guadalupe had become celebrated in calligraphy and miniature-painting. Some of the missals made by them have escaped pillage; likewise, and more easy to account for considering their great bulk, some eighty or ninety huge choir books decorated with exquisite vignettes. These are still in use in the choir.

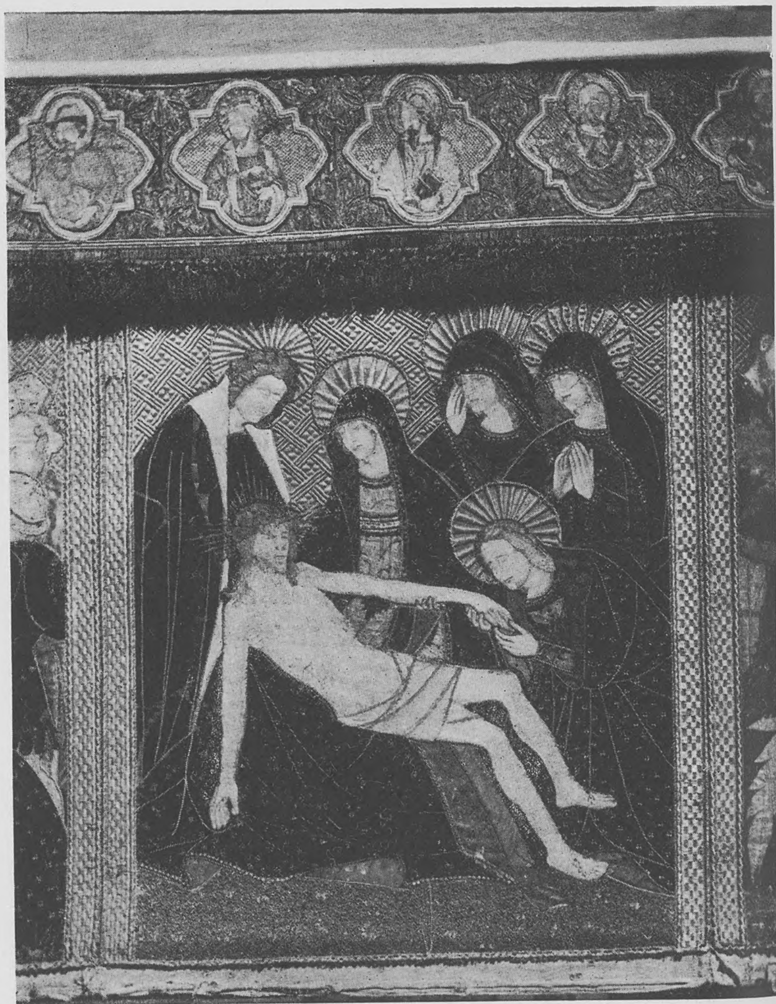
But of all the work produced in the Guadalupe schools in late Gothic and early Renaissance that which most appeals to the feminine visitor is the embroidery. In olden times the Spanish needle wrought magic, plied alike by men and women; but no museum of the land tells the tale more eloquently than do the well-filled wardrobes of this mountain monastery. There are altar frontals, one is tempted to say by the hundreds, worked all over with figure and floral themes and besprinkled with pearls; and there are orphreys to the copes, heavy with gold stitches and framed in precious jewels. The embroidery itself varies from the flat Gothic manner to the more realistic (and less decorative) Renaissance manner of *chiaroscuro*. Then besides the cunning



THE VISITATION: PAGES FROM THE PRIORS' BREVIARY AT GUADALUPE



THE NATIVITY: PAGES FROM THE PRIORS' BREVIARY AT GUADALUPE



ONE OF THE MOST BEAUTIFUL EMBROIDERIES AT GUADALUPE

The Deposition, part of an altar frontal. The robes are applied velvets of the fifteenth century, stitched with gold stars

needlework to admire there is the *tela* or fabric itself—magnificent damasks, velvets, and tissues, or cloth of gold, from the renowned factories of Sevilla, Toledo, Talavera, and Valencia. These constitute a veritable museum of Spanish textiles of the best period. The sheer weight of all the silk, woven or stitched, that lies in this repository must mount into tons; an unpoetic way, I admit, of expressing its importance.

Among the superb altar frontals is one that surpasses all others both for technical skill and decorativeness. It is the *Frontal de la Pasion*, and dates from the fifteenth century. Lovely in every way, composition, drawing and coloring. The linen ground is stitched with heavy gold lozenge pattern; faces and hands are worked in thick silk, untwisted; the garments are not embroidered, but of applied brocade and velvet, the latter shaved of its pile or nap to indicate the folds. Specially beautiful is the Virgin's mantle, deep blue velvet over a tunic of grayish purple damask, and the velvet studded with tiny gold stars. The other Maries wear darker velvet unstarred, while Joseph of Aramithea glows in green damask. Even the Jews scourging are in princely silks. A picture, lovely as any painted primitive.

It would take many visits to the wardrobes fully to examine the vestments of the Virgin and the clergy,

but one must have pity on poor Padre Juan, for it requires no small amount of physical exertion to pull out drawer after drawer, deep and long enough to hold the voluminous copes with the least amount of folding. It was only this consideration that finally made us give up the vestments for the Virgin's jewels. But save for a few ancient pieces, the shine and glint of the jewels looked somewhat vulgar after those mellowed needlework pictures that have lain for centuries in their dark boxes.

While the Guadalupe collection of vestments is nothing short of stupendous, it represents only part of what was shown to the visitor of a century ago. Don Antonio Pons, for instance, who minutely recorded Spain's art treasures in his *Viage de España* in 1770, saw, merely of the gifts that had been made to the Virgin, the following: many gold and silver crowns, sceptres, rings, collars, chains, (one hundred and forty-six of these, all set with diamonds and other stones of immense value) and over a hundred robes made of the richest cloth of gold, some of them literally covered with pearls, rubies, emeralds, amethysts; one mantle alone having cost some forty thousand ducats! Besides these personal attributes, there was an enormous quantity of sumptuous *orfevrerie* for the altar—chalices, salvers, censers, custodias, crosses, missals—hardly a one now left!

How the various items in Pons' inventory began to disappear after the Disestablishment may be read in a series of pamphlets published in 1838 and 39; first the ejected monks accused an unscrupulous politician who came several times to examine and inventory the treasure, of always leaving fewer pearls in the embroidered robes, and less plate on the altar. In 1838, the provincial deputy for Cáceres "offered to the public" a memorial as to the cause of the dilapidation of the monastery, making certain unpleasant insinuations against the monks which the former chief steward of the community immediately refuted in a *Vindication against the memoir published by the delegate from Cáceres.* But the Hieronymite's pamphlet not only failed to cause the accuser to retract, but provoked from him another offering to the public whose title-page reads *Reply to the vindication by the ex-monk and chief majordomo of the suppressed Monastery of Guadalupe, by the author of the memoir as to the causes of deterioration in said monastery both before and after the expulsion of the monks in 1835.* The vindicating majordomo hardly had time to retort when the politician printed an *Addition to the memoir published regarding the causes of deterioration of the monastery of Guadalupe.* With this the ex-steward appears to have given up the polemic. Not having read either side we do not know where blame would

be most justly laid, but there can be little doubt that in the breasts of public servants who were sent to disestablish the various Spanish monasteries, cupidity overcame patriotism.

And now for the Virgin herself, nucleus and *raison d'être* of this fortified pile of masonry and all the sumptuous accessories it contained. The sacred image which the wandering cow tracked down stands on a revolving throne in the apse wall, above the High Altar. It is accessible from a tiny chapel lined with crimson velvet and built out behind the apse. Padre Juan solemnly revolved the throne, watching for the effect on us. I fear we were disappointingly impassive. To us it was merely a wooden statue somewhat over a meter in height, whose only visible portions were the oval face and the right hand. The rest is rendered formless by a dozen or more jewelled mantles hung from the shoulders and head, above which is a top-heavy halo and a huge crown of diamonds. The features, blackened by time and incense fumes, and seeming even blacker for being framed in a band of pearls, nevertheless preserve their outline. The expression is that of a grave meditative Minerva—a Virgin of the primitive days when the Byzantine convention still held sway, before the sculptors of the West went to nature for their models

and gave us the humanized Mother of God. As the archaic type persisted longer in Spain than in Italy or France, it is quite probable that the figure in question is as late as the thirteenth century; that is to say, contemporaneous with the famous *Virgen de la Vega* in Salamanca. Originally it was a seated figure holding the Child on the left arm, but in order to accommodate the rich draperies proffered by grateful beneficiaries, the projecting seat at the back, likewise the knees and the clasped infant, were cut away, leaving the torso an upright post with a head on top. That such liberties should have been taken with a supposedly miraculous effigy astonishes us; even we godless moderns would be afraid of breaking the charm by practising such amputation; but perhaps sanction was first asked and obtained from Our Lady herself, or it may even have been ordered in the original conversation with the cowherd.

Legend does not bear out the modern archæologists who would ascribe the statue of Our Lady of Guadalupe to the twelfth or following century. No indeed! It was carved by no more recent hand than Saint Luke's and had already worked many miracles in Rome before ever it reached Spanish soil (as is claimed for the Virgin of La Rábida). Like the Santa Faz or kerchief of Santa Veronica of which the city of Jáen is the proud custodian, it was a gift from a pope to a

Spanish bishop. The recipient was the learned Leandro of Seville, brother of San Isidoro. Bishop Leandro had met Gregory the Great in Constantinople and there so won that scholar's admiration that Gregory dedicated to him the famous *Morals*. After the author became pope he sent Leandro a copy of his work all the way from Rome to Seville, and it was along with this papal gift that the Guadalupe image came. Thus the legend; and who indeed is to say that the figure is Spanish Romanesque and not Byzantine? But as to Saint Luke, that is another story.

The rest of the legend is, as we have seen, along the usual line. When the Moors came, the fleeting Visigoths bore it away from Seville; but not all the way to Asturias whither they carried the valuable manuscript, the *Etymologies*, of Leandro's more celebrated brother, San Isidoro. Instead they buried it in the wild mountains of Estremadura. And of course a humble shepherd found it centuries after and miracles began and the clergy declared the whole proceeding perfectly regular. Popular devotion and royal favor worked hand in hand to surround this almost shapeless piece of wood with a pomp and magnificence out of all proportion to its powers or its needs. One is staggered on reflecting, as one stands before it in the little velvet-hung sanctuary, what a riot of images emanated from that simple pastoral Judea whose

inhabitants cared less, in reality, for art than any other race of the East. One recalls how Moses the Asiatic fulminated against images and image-worship; yet Guadalupe, the sumptuous shrine that grew up around a small wooden image, had its roots in that ancient cradle of Christianity. The fathers of the early Christian church followed faithfully in Moses' footsteps; they too forbade images. Art, which was matter, could not serve God, who was spirit. But all these Asiatics overlooked one elemental fact—that image-art is born of the European races from whom the craving for the human likeness, expressed in clay, wood, or stone, cannot be eradicated.

Once on a glittering ice-field ages and ages ago
Ung a maker of pictures fashioned an image of snow
Fashioned the form of a tribesman

. . . .

Pleased was his tribe with that image—came in their
  hundreds to scan—
Handled it, smelt it, and grunted, "Verily, this is a man!"

In Ung's far-off day the people must have the form of a tribesman, to call it a god; and in the modern-born Christian era it was no less human to desire the form of a tribeswoman to call it the mother of God. In the ninth century an unwise minority of iconoclasts rose in protest and broke the images; but the Byzantine monarchs Constantine and Irene, whose

business was first and foremost to hold their throne, had to give back to the masses the images they were craving for.

Successive Christian rulers, whether they sat in shifting dynastic thrones or the eternal papal chair, recognized the wisdom of the Byzantine monarchs. They saw that the mob loved blindly the instrument by which it was governed; since the mob must have its images, these images must be turned into a power. Priests and kings must make the image and its raiment and the earthly house that held it so overpoweringly splendid that the simple mind would be thrilled by the thought of that other mansion, indescribably grander, where dwelt the Great Spirit clad in unthinkable majesty, awaiting them, the faithful. And in fact, the day we visited the Virgin's sanctuary and jewel room, a simple village girl, sister to one of the lay brothers, was permitted to pass in with us. The sight "dissolved her into ecstasies and brought all heaven before her eyes," "What must Paradise be like!" she exclaimed rapturously. "*Entrar aqui, es entrar en la gloria!*"

Those who have read of Poblet once so rich in treasure and now an empty gaping ruin, or of Silos whose priceless books and plate were nevertheless scattered to the four corners of the earth, will natur-



OUR LADY OF GUADALUPE IN ONE OF HER RICHEST, BEJEWELLED ROBES



THE NOBLE COUPLE WHOSE PRAYERS FOR A SON TO THE VIRGIN OF GUADALUPE WERE ANSWERED



ONE OF ZURBURÁN'S PAINTINGS AT GUADALUPE, OUR LORD COMMENDING PRIOR SALMERÓN

ally wonder how so much of the Guadalupe treasure remained unharmed after the monks were driven out. The answer is contained in the preceding paragraph —image-worship. Neither Poblet nor Silos held a miracle-working image. The villagers themselves rose against attempted abstractions, protecting the shrine as best they could from all but politicians. Not long after the Disestablishment Act the archbishop of Toledo appointed the church for the use of the parish; this appointment included the Mudéjar cloister and the shrunken plate and jewels, so at least there was a parish priest who assumed direct responsibility. For aught we know he may have called to his aid, as have the present occupants, monster mastifs, Tremendo and Tremenda; but even so the real guardians of the treasure were the parishioners themselves. All had been given to their Virgin in love and devotion; how could they deserve her favor if they permitted her despoliation. The state, they argued, might take over and sell monastery land and buildings but not the personal possessions of the Virgin.

But even in this defensive mood they could not prevent the loss of much portable, easily concealed art. Have we not found two priceless paintings in the Balearic Islands, in a family descended from a Cáceres deputy of the early forties? And did not the state sell with all its contents intact, the abbots'

grange five miles over the hills, and did not the lucky purchaser dispose of the paintings alone for several hundred times the price of the estate? We must be content, now that the primitives are gone, with the splendid array of Zurbaráns. When recently a proposal was made in Madrid and consented to by the Archbishop of Toledo, to remove them from the sacristy and send them for exhibition in the capital, the unlettered peasants showed they were no simpletons in such matters. They reminded the royal commission that objects of art sent from the provinces to gladden the cultivated Madrid eye did not always come back. They insisted that their Zurbaráns should remain there on the very sacristy wall for which they were painted, and were prepared to defend them with their lives if necessary.

Thus it is that when the Franciscans took possession of Guadalupe they found far more treasure than they had dared to hope. Aside from what had been guarded under lock and key, a fair amount came to light when the monks began cleaning out the débris of years from cloisters and cells,—ivory and alabaster statuettes, illuminated missals, small silver objects of the cult. True, the monastery inventories, kept intact for centuries, showed that certain priceless works had disappeared, but what remains is easily enough to make Guadalupe a rich museum of Spanish

art. And even if, unhappily, the place had been denuded there would still be the beautiful long horseshoe arcade of the cloister, and the monumental brick lavabo, and the simple old-fashioned garden that Brother Luciano keeps so well trimmed and watered. If only the *frailes* spend judiciously the incoming funds of the pilgrims we may yet see all Guadalupe's wounds dressed. We may even see them tear down the classic church with which the unemotional eighteenth century encumbered the lovely old enclosure where, save for it, all is picturesque and rare and beautifully Spanish.

And what, if not rare and picturesque and beautifully Spanish, was the very small sturdy Guadalupiano who went trudging the highroad ahead of us the evening we took our last twilight walk. All alone, singing at the top of his little voice, we following close to catch the words of his song. It went somewhat like this:

Yo voy por la carretera	I'm off by the highroad
¿Por donde vas tu?	How go you?
Yo me llamo Ventura	My name is Ventura
¿Como te llamas tu?	What do they call you?
Yo tengo un hermanito	I have one little brother
¿Cuantos tienes tu?	How many have you?
Pero yo voy solito solito	But I'm off all alone
¿Con quien vas tu?	With whom go you?

VI

SANTA CLARA DE MOGUER
SANTA MARÍA DE LA RÁBIDA

VI

SANTA CLARA DE MOGUER
SANTA MARÍA DE LA RÁBIDA

THE nearest large city with good hotels is Seville, but except by private motor one could not go and come in a day. Huelva at the mouth of the Odiel River possesses a very fair hotel, and from there one crosses in a rowboat to La Rábida; but the best starting point is Moguer. Moguer is reached by leaving the train a few stations before Huelva, at San Juan del Puerto, where a bus takes passengers across the bridge. The Moguer inn, the Almirante Pinzón, is poor indeed, a fact unsuspected by the kindly proprietor; but Moguer has monuments in the town itself which ought to be seen, and from it one may walk or drive through the seven or eight miles of pine woods to La Rábida.

The province of Huelva, bisected by the Rio Tinto and overlooking the blue Bay of Cádiz, is picturesque, fertile and rich. Palms, pines, vines, mines. Not here so close to Africa does one look for early Romanesque monasteries, for the Moors held the ground far into the thirteenth century; but what Huelva does offer is two monastic houses of very special historic interest. These, along with the parish church of San Jorge which stands midway between them, epitomize

Christopher Columbus' efforts and sojourn in Spain. With the monks of La Rábida he dwelt while his preparations were in progress; in the church of St. George he and the inhabitants of the region heard the royal authorization for the great enterprise read aloud; in the convent church of Santa Clara he prayed the entire night before embarking on his immortal voyage. This spot, like Nazareth, is an obscure corner to have cradled an idea transcendental; and in each case, after the idea had crystallized into a stupendous achievement, a new gift to the world, the little corner remained unchanged.

Even the inn of Moguer is unchanged; the bedrooms have no windows and the food is drenched in thick, strong Andalusian oil. But such things are tolerable for a night or two, and Moguer has the advantage of putting one at once in touch with the prime protagonists in the great adventure. Aside from Columbus' remote connection, we have here to this day the numerous descendants of his two chief collaborators, the brothers Martin Alonzo and Vicente Yañez Pinzón. Indeed, the inn we cannot praise is named for one of the descendants, Admiral Pinzón of the Spanish Navy, which naming is hardly fair to Moguer's most distinguished citizen of latter days. This Admiral, who died in 1891, belonged to Vincent's branch of the family, which had been ennobled in 1518

and permitted to use an escutcheon on which figure three caravels. The Pinzóns comprise the *gente gorda* of Moguer, and claim to be the one and only direct line, but then so do the humbler Pinzóns, father and son, who bring tourists over by boat from Huelva to La Rábida; so perhaps it is best not to probe the matter. At any rate, all who bear the name may well be proud of it, for the brothers Martin and Vicente were most important, though long unrecognized, factors in the memorable event of 1492. Only the smallest part of their effort is recorded in Columbus' diary, or even in the more specific declarations of Dr. Fernández of Palos, who testified (in Vicente's law suit against the Crown) as to the coming of the foreigner to La Rábida:

> The agreement and fellowship which he (Cristóbal Colón) formed with Martin Alonzo Pinzón and Vicente Yañez dated from this time because they were suitable persons and had a knowledge of matters pertaining to the sea, and advised him and arranged many things beyond his knowledge which were all for the benefit of said voyage.

Furthermore, Bartolomé de Las Casas, the priest who waged such fiery but futile campaign against the white man's cruelty to the Indians, accredits the two Pinzóns with very substantial aid:

> As Cristóbal Colón wished to contribute an eighth part of the expense of the voyage in order to have his eighth of

the profits . . . and as he came from the court (to La Rábida) in very needy circumstances . . . it is quite probable and apparently true according to what I have heard, that said Martin, of himself or for himself and brothers, did lend Cristóbal Colón the necessary half-million (of maravedis).

Whether or not it was true, and the Pinzóns always claimed it was, that they had furnished most of the material necessities for the voyage, certain it is that Martin Alonzo, who was the richest shipowner and trader of Huelva before he met Columbus, died bankrupt immediately after his return in 1493. His brother Vicente brought suit and tried to recover their lost moneys, with the result that in 1518 Charles V granted him the right to armorial bearings and had an Act drawn up in which were set down the many memorable things done by the two brothers for the glory of Spain. This acknowledgment of services rendered came rather tardily. Old Martin, whose name had been so completely overshadowed by that of the great Genoese, was long since dead and his family remained impoverished; but at least Vicente, who had been an independent navigator in the New World ever since, got a patent of nobility out of the inquest and an escutcheon with three caravels.

Thus Martin Alonzo Pinzón partook of Christopher's hardships but not of his glory. Only Palos where he was born, and La Rábida where he died, and

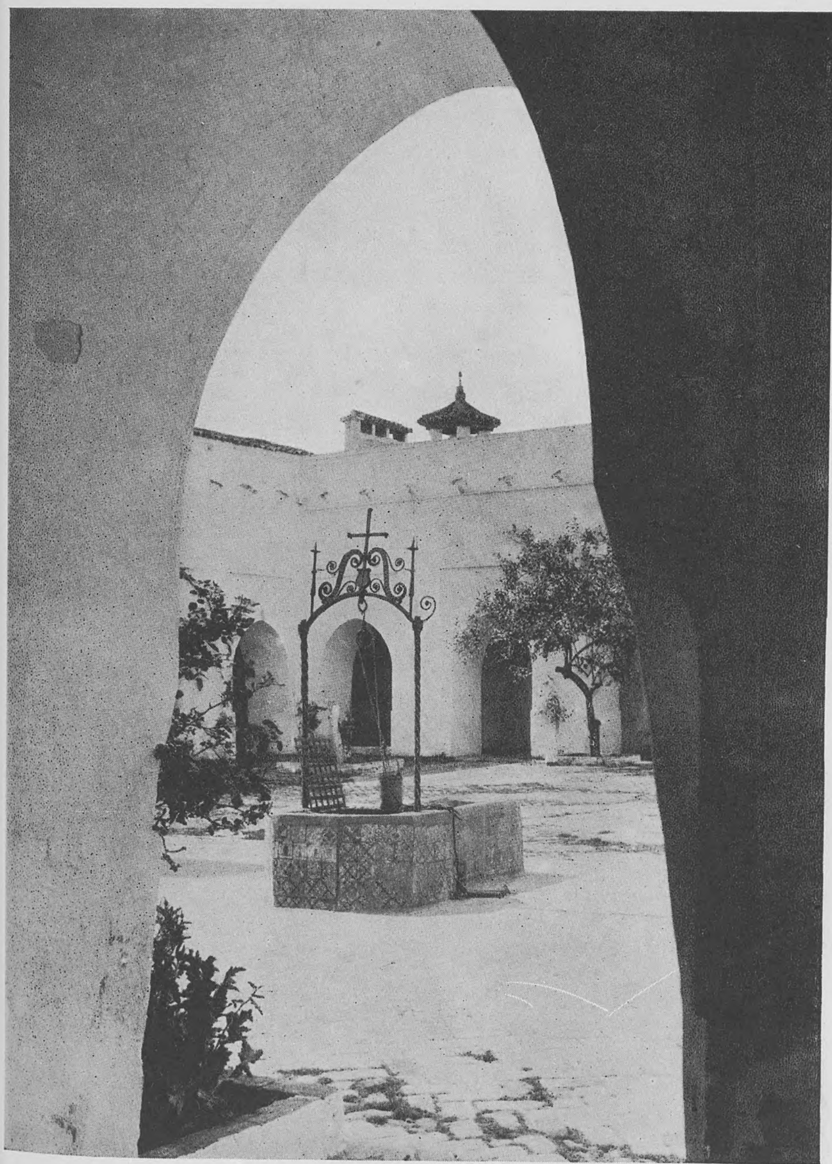
Moguer where his descendants live, know his story. In our own country, the facts concerning him (and set forth in Don José María Asensio's *Estudio Histórico*, to mention but one of many sources), would interfere with the ancient Columbian tradition as supplied by Washington Irving at a time when a good part of the Spanish archives were closed to foreign investigators and when only Columbus' own version of the discovery could be consulted. One of the many cases where belated fact does not accord with preëstablished fiction.

Huelva, across the murky Red River (Rio Tinto), claims to have given birth to a still obscurer actor in the great drama, or rather in the prologue to it. In the sixteenth century it was generally accepted that Huelva's son, the pilot Alonzo Sánchez, had been the involuntary precursor of the Italian navigator. Without intending a further outpost than the Azores, he was blown *nolens volens* across the Atlantic. When, by miracle, he got back, moribund, to the Madeiras, he bequeathed to the Genoese mariner who was then living there a map he had made of the new found land. This map is supposed to have been Christopher's trump card, used when all other arguments had failed. The land was there, already discovered. All he wanted was official permission to go with enough men formally to take possession of it in

the name of Spain. Thus ran the story through Huelva and Portugal for half a century after the startling event.

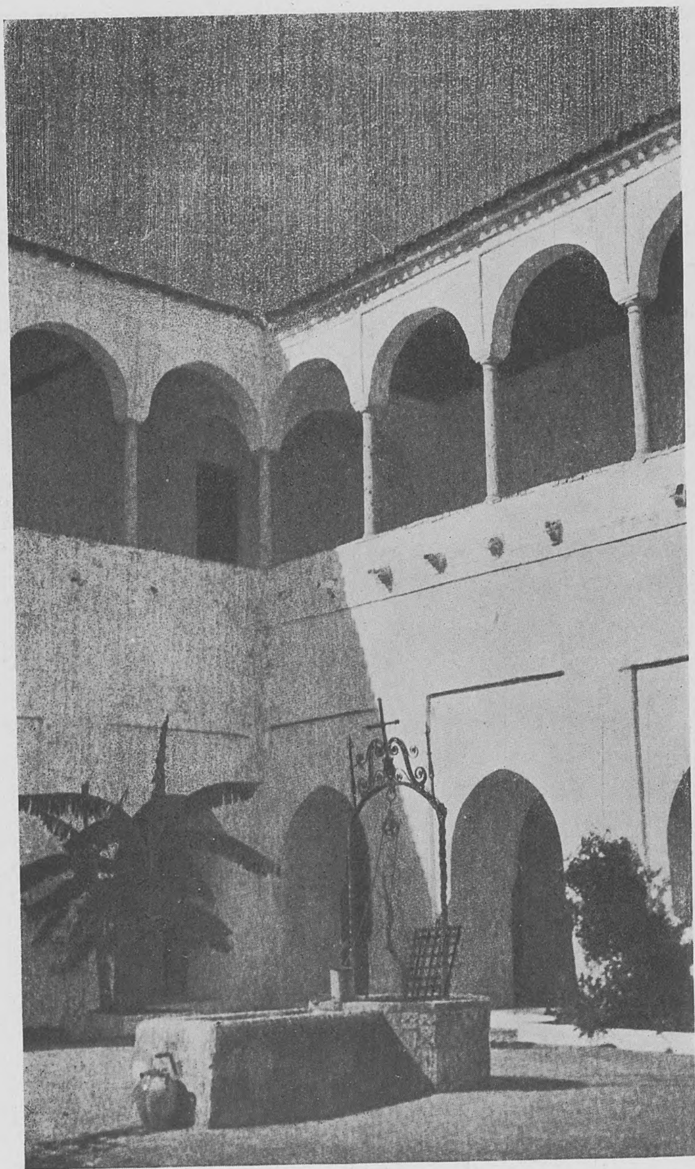
But we were writing of monks and nuns, not mariners. Back to the monastery of Huelva; or rather, the convent, since it in English is assigned to the female sex. In Spanish, however, the two terms are interchangeable; the *Convento de la Rábida*, for instance never knew any inmates but monks; nor the *Monasterio de Sigena*, any but nuns. In the case of the Moguer institution English and Spanish usage are in accord, for it appears always to have been called a *convento*, and always to have harbored Franciscan nuns of the Order of Saint Clara.

Andalusia not having been wrested from the Moors until the middle of the thirteenth century, we must not expect to find Santa Clara de Moguer like that early northern type of religious house that is still oppressive with mediæval melancholy. The Andalusian cloister is bound to look younger by several centuries. Moreover, climate protests against, nay, prohibits, its wearing a too lugubrious sanctity; and the building material of the region being white stucco, that in itself would stamp any edifice, even against its will, with that cheerful play of light and shade that is congruous with southern sun. In Santa Clara,



THE SIMPLE WHITEWASHED ANDALUSIAN CLOISTER OF SANTA CLARA WITH WELL-BASIN OF COLOURED TILES

The playground of the convent school



THE CLOISTER OF SANTA CLARA DAZZLING WHITE IN THE MOONLIGHT

the cheerfulness does not stop with the white arcade of the cloister but pervades the whole establishment, for the nuns keep a thriving school for girls and the place rings with their fresh young voices. Fancy a teacher-nun of cold and courtly Castile standing at her convent door and vivaciously clicking her castanets while her little pupils file out; yet this is no uncommon sight in Andalusia.

As to the foundation of Santa Clara de Moguer history is not precise. This part of Al Andalus was divided out by the Christian conqueror among those nobles who helped him win it from the Moors. The ocean-bordered stretch containing Huelva, Palos, and Moguer was given into the keeping of Admiral Alonzo Jofre Tenorio, who is said to have founded the convent, though others ascribe it to his heir, Don Martín Portocarrero and the latter's wife, Elvira. At any rate, the Portocarrero sepulchres can be seen beside the high altar of the church, and the family is known to have had a splendid palace across from the convent. Of this not a trace remains.

On the main street of Moguer stands the fortified conventual group dating from the early fourteenth century, so walled in that from the outside there is little more than the apse of the brick church to detain one. The brickwork tells us that the Mudéjares were the builders employed, and on entering we find traces

of them everywhere—*azulejos* or polychrome tiles, *artesonados* or decorated wooden ceilings, a glistening white *yeso* cloister with tiled well in the centre; and, in the church, curious choir-stalls painted in the same tradition as the *artesonados*. As the Moors excelled in carpentry, it is natural enough that the making of stalls should have been handed over to them; and no doubt the typical Moorish product preceded the Gothic type of tall-backed choir-stall now general in Andalusian churches. Only two extant examples do I recall that resemble Moguer—the fragment in the Madrid Museum brought from Gradefes, near León, a region in which the Christians expelled from Córdoba in the ninth century sought refuge, carrying with them many an Arab tradition; and the throne on which the lady abbess of Sigena used to sit, and which is now disintegrating in the little Episcopal Museum of Lérida.

To a Californian the Moguer cloister must seem to smile like a familiar face; San Gabriel, Santa Barbara, and other mission fragments up his coast, to say nothing of the recent domestic architecture these have inspired, have acquainted him with this picturesque plaster style. It is what those civilizers and builders of old—the monks—carried to the Spanish colonies to be later designated as Mission Style, and to be accepted as typifying Spanish architecture in

general. A more correct classification, and one quite as suggestive of romance, would have been Andalusian. Inherited from the Moorish occupation, retaining the Eastern arcaded patio and splashing fountain, and the Eastern material, brick revested with light plaster and glazed tile, it was specially suitable to the semi-tropic climate of Andalusia and to that part of our own country that the Spaniards discovered and claimed.

The Moguer cloister is large, being practically a thoroughfare through which the school girls pass from street to class; it is unplanted; it misses the charm of fragrant flowers, of solitary cypress, of solemn hush. It is a strictly utilitarian cloister, paved with stone; but it is a cheery, pleasant spot for all that, with a well-curb of lively tiles and an old iron crane above, with the sharp contrast of sun out in the open and purple shadows under the arcade. Here are placed a few desks, and one can always see a white-hooded nun bending over some little pupil. I remarked to the Mother Superior on the striking beauty of one of these hooded teachers. "Yes," she answered, "that is why she is here. She considered her beauty a test of her piety—whether she was capable of giving it back to the Lord. She has been able, you see, to make the sacrifice." As she spoke the lovely young creature stroked her

pupil's cheek and moved on through the purple arcade.

The convent church is a simple piece of local, that is to say, brick Gothic, with interesting vaulting and high, pointed windows that would impart much grace to the eight-sided apse if they had not been blocked up to accommodate a lofty Baroque retable. In Columbus' day a simple, low, painted triptych stood there on a plain altar table. Of this early painting, only the central panel, a Virgin and Child, has survived and now hangs at the rear of the nave on the arch that supports the nuns' choir. The Clarisas, eager to appropriate some of the glory of the great discovery for their house, declare that Christopher prayed before this picture the entire night before embarking for the Indies and again the entire night after his return. The only other painted work which the convent has not parted with is the giant fresco of Saint Christopher carrying the Infant Christ. This is one of the earliest paintings of the Reconquest in Andalusia, and Spanish archæologists attach much importance to it. Ordinary mortals may dare to consider it decidedly unattractive.

Where now are the other art treasures of this once rich community? Munificently befriended as it was by the powerful Portocarrero family, receiving into its bosom only noble ladies who brought rich dowries,

it was not behind other Andalusian convents in acquiring costly furnishings. To-day, one leaf of a triptych, a few old choral books with charming miniatures, a few old vestments with orphreys, are all that remain of a once priceless hoard. This is how one of the nuns explained the present poverty. In the late seventeenth century and during all of the eighteenth, she said, when discipline was extremely lax in all the convents, young ladies refused to enter unless they could bring their personal servants, and in this way the running expenses were so increased that works of art had to be sold from time to time to buy food. One is reminded of the relaxation in the nunneries as described in the late seventeenth century by the Marquesa de los Rios to the Baroness Aulnoy as the two travelled towards Burgos. The first-named informed the latter that she was about to retire to

"Las Huelgas de Burgos, which is a famous nunnery, wherein there is an hundred and fifty Nuns, most of 'em the Daughters of Princes, Dukes, and Titulados. The Abbess is Lady of fourteen large Towns, and above fifty other Places wherein she chuses Governors and Magistrates; she is Superior of seventeen Convents, collates to several Benefices, and disposes of twelve Commanderships in favour of whom she pleases."

"Can you, madam," asked the curious Frenchwoman, "accustom yourself to so retired a Life as that of the Convent?"

"In effect, these Religious have Liberty enough," explained the Marchioness. "They are commonly the handsomest young Women of the Family who are there; they enter therein so young that they know not what they are made to leave, nor what they undertake at the Age of six or seven, and it may be sooner. They are caused to make Vows, when it is often the Father or Mother, or some near Relation who pronounces them for 'em while the little Sacrifice disports herself with Sugar-plums and lets 'em dress her how they will. Yet the Bargain holds, there's no unsaying it; however, they have everything which can be expected in their Condition. There are at Madrid some whom they call the Ladies of Saint James; they are properly Canonnesses, who make their own Tryals like the Knights of this same Order; they bear like them a Sword, made in the form of a Cross, embroidered with crimson Silk; they bear 'em on their Scapularies and great Cloaks, which are white. These Ladies' House is very stately; all who come to visit 'em enter without any difficulty; their Apartments are very fine and every whit as well furnisht as if they were at large in the World; they enjoy great Pensions and each of 'em has three or four Women to wait on her. It's true they never stir out nor see their nearest Relations except through several Gratings. This perhaps would look horrid in another Country but in Spain they are accustom'd to Confinement.

"There are Convents where the Religious see more Cavaliers than the Women who live at large, neither are they less gallant. It is impossible to have more Gayety than they, and, as I have already told you, Madam, here in the Convent are more Beauties than abroad; but it must

be granted there are several among them who are deeply sensible at their having been so soon sacrificed; they think of the Pleasures they have never tasted, as the only ones which can make this Life happy. They pass theirs in a Condition worthy of Compassion, always telling you that they are there by Force and that the Vows they are made to repeat at the Age of five or six Years are to be regarded like Childrens' Plays."

Certain of our Spanish friends consider that there is more fiction than truth in the lively Baroness Aulnoy's letters from Spain, and especially in this picture of the convents, which she claims to have received, word for word, from La Marquesa de los Rios. Be that as it may, at Moguer, as elsewhere, the number of novitiates and entrance fees kept decreasing, but because of the many waiting women brought in by the novitiates the convent retinue and consequent running expenses kept increasing. Meanwhile the household economy fell into most discrepant state. To set it right a servant would be sent out from time to time with some rare work of art to sell; and besides the authorized selling much went on that the lady nuns knew nothing about, the profits being shared with the servant's lover instead of being turned into the convent treasury. One day the Clarisas woke up to find their house quite dismantled, upon which they resigned themselves to genteel poverty until the new dispensation of convent affairs

brought a wide-awake, useful, working sisterhood to turn the ruined house into a prosperous school.

The *Madre superiora*, who spoke English very well, was entertaining another superiora who spoke it even better. This distinguished visitor consented to come downstairs and greet me, and she proved as sprightly and entertaining as her hostess. Old pupils, both, of the Irish nuns at Gibraltar, they took pardonable pride in their rich, full, Celtic English. Yet they were not nearly so loquacious as the Sigena ladies. Indeed, the Sigena process was reversed, for these of Moguer were more determined to hear from me certain things about the outside world than that I should learn from them a few facts about their little corner of it. In that extraordinary phenomenon, the *Yankee lady*, they were specially interested, and no amount of eloquence could dislodge a few well defined prejudices they held against her. "With her ambitions to lead an independent life I sympathize," said the superiora of Santa Clara, "but these should not interfere with her marrying and becoming a mother. You do not deny, señora, that many of your women refuse to marry—"

"But both of you refused to marry," I couldn't resist reminding her with a smile.

"Daughter," archly smiled one in return, "are you sure we had the chance? You know the nunnery is the refuge of the unsought."

I could honestly make answer that women who at middle life were pretty, vivacious, and accomplished must have been more than ordinarily desirable at twenty. They were not displeased, but checked my flattery, as they called it, by calling up and presenting three little Pinzón sisters, nieces of our friend the poet of Moguer. Lovely girls they were, of twelve, thirteen, and fourteen, with dark melting eyes and heavy black braids. Their manners were charming, and hearing that I was about to return to Madrid they sent all manner of *recuerdos* to their uncle Juan Ramón and hoped he would come soon to visit them. Then, as the children were dispersing for lunch, we were conducted through the empty class-rooms to admire their simple but modern equipment. The two superioras seemed really to enjoy our visit (if it is not a lapse of modesty on my part to say so) and I, by way of adieu, made so bold as to repeat what a certain nun said after meeting the attractive Santa Teresa: "Blessed be God that I have met a holy woman who converses without ceremony and pious pruderies." I only hope they did not, on thinking over my compliments, commit themselves to a penance!

That night when a hush had fallen over the lively convent we peeped in again at the cloister from the main street. It was dazzling white in the moonlight

save under the arched walk where the shadows outlined big scallops. Still and deserted, its bearing was not sad, not even melancholy; above all, not cruel like Las Huelgas or Sigena in the north. It was as if its daily contact with joyous young life had warmed it into the consciousness of a valuable purpose. It seemed to be looking into the living future rather than the dead past. It was not at all like my preconceived idea of a convent of Clarisas, an idea gathered from Azorin's novel *La Voluntad.* Readers will recall the description of Justine's entering the convent. Distrusting her love for the hero as a snare set by the devil, she decides to take the path of least resistance. The only hesitation comes in choosing an order. "In the symbolism of the religious orders," Azorin tells us, "the rose is the emblem of the Benedictines, the hyacinth of the Carthusians, the tulip of the Augustinians, the carnation of the Trinitarians, the white lily of the Dominicans, the violet of the Franciscans. Among all these mystic flowers Justine preferred the violet. She would be a humble *franciscana;* she would follow the rule which Saint Francis gave to his disciple Clara."

Then follows a description of that ceremony by which the girl renounces her free will.

The nuns are at the door of their convent; they hold lighted candles; their faces are veiled. When Justine

arrives before them silent, her head lowered, somewhat sad, they break into a long Latin chant. This ended, they lead her in procession to the choir. There a priest awaits her. The nuns take their places along the stalls and the choir leaders step out into the centre, imploring, *Oh Holy Mother of God, pray for her.* The nuns respond. Justine kneels on a black cloth halfway down the aisle and the priest offers a prayer in Latin. Then addressing himself to Justine he asks gently:

"My daughter, what dost thou ask for on entering this holy house?"

And Justine answers: "The mercy of God, the poverty of the Franciscan order, the companionship of these nuns."

The priest after exhorting her on the strictness of the rules asks:

"My daughter, do you desire to become a nun of your own free will and do you enter this house with the intention of remaining in the order?"

Justine replies in the affirmative, and after a few more questions and answers the nuns divest her of her profane garments and clothe her in the Franciscan habit. Into humble sandals they thrust her feet, and in her hand they place a lighted candle. Thus arrayed, Justine again kneels on the black cloth. There are more intonations by the priest and more responses by the nuns; and the priest, after reciting the Lord's Prayer in Latin, girds Justine with the hempen scourge, clasps the scapulary around her neck, and lastly, puts the cape over her shoulders. Sprinkling her with holy water he chants *Ad esto supplicationibus nostris omnipotens Deus.*

This is the supreme moment of the ceremony. Justine

prostrates herself upon the black cloth, immobile, rigid, as if she were dead, and the nuns sing *Veni Creator Spiritus*. This is followed by the *Kyrie Eleison* hardly more than whispered, and a final *Pater Noster*. Meanwhile, Justine lies there on the black cloth with her fine delicate hands crossed on her breast, her eyes closed, and the drops of holy water falling gently on her pale face.

The ceremony ends. She rises and passes through the file of nuns to kiss the altar. Returning, she presses her lips to the hand of the abbess, and embraces the nuns one by one, imploring them to pray for her. A psalm is intoned. All leave the church, each nun disappearing silently into her cell. The heavy door is closed behind them and in the *coro* all is again still. Justine is now a novitiate of Santa Clara. Her free-will is dead.

On the left, the flat sandy road from Moguer to La Rábida skirts a wild stretch whose flora is so very curious that botanists come from all parts of the world to study it, so the poet of Moguer tells us. To the right are the swampy banks and reddish waters of the ever-broadening Tinto, which flows down from incalculably rich copper mines whose metal burnishes the stream and gives it its name. The copper of Rio Tinto and the near-by sulphur deposits of Tharsis were worked by the Phoenicians and Romans of old; they are rented out to the enterprising English of to-day; but Spain alas! during all her national life neglected them. Out beyond the

meeting of the two rivers, the Tinto with the Odiel, is the bar.

Along the Rábida road, few and far between, are little white houses. Curious that in one of them, an American woman who had been educated in the old Bonaparte school in New Jersey should have passed several years of her life. Married to a Spanish engineer stationed here in this isolated spot, she and her young daughter, with that characteristic American conviction, namely, that we are all our brother's keeper, gathered the wild untutored youngsters of the roadside together—goatherds, most of them—and gave them gratuitous and unwelcome daily instruction. The material was not of the most promising, but at the end of the year a few were picked out as fit for confirmation. After much patient preparation they were presented to the *cura* of Palos for examination. Just before entering the clerical presence, the brightest lad, their chief hope, suddenly lost his grasp on the one fundamental point. "Senorita," he whispered desperately, "please tell me once more—how many gods did you say there were?"

The only considerable sign of life along the Rábida road is the memorable but utterly insignificant little fishing village of Palos de Moguer. It is said to have been once a prosperous port with proper wharves and dockage; but it presents no indication now of

man's ever having held out a helping hand. Low tide leaves a vast expanse of muddy black swamp, and not a single mast rises to break the flat yellowish line of the bar. Some effort of the imagination is required to recreate the bustling scene of that August day of the year 1492 when the Santa María, the Pinta, and the Niña, the merest little babies of ships, raised sail and started out from Palos across the mediæval *Sea of Darkness.*

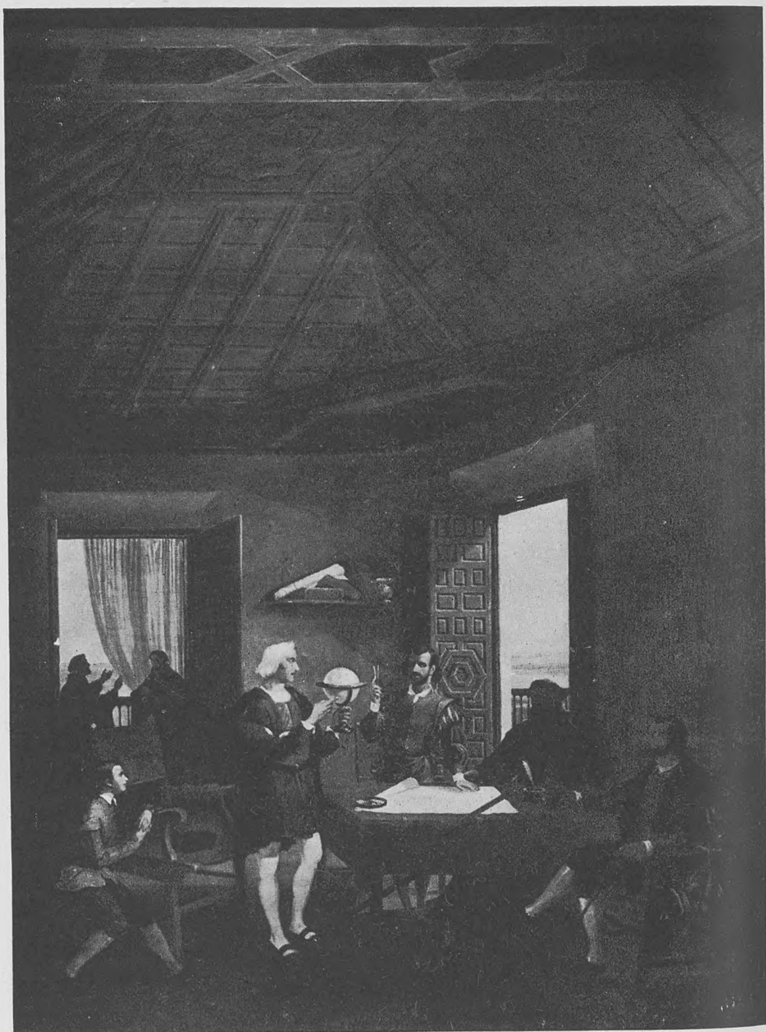
Palos was neither willing nor proud to be the starting-point for the momentous voyage. Against her will she had been dragged into the whole proceeding, and not because of mere propinquity, either, to the mariner's erstwhile refuge of La Rábida; that was only coincidence. The following royal order to the mayor and citizens of Palos explains why greatness —a greatness which the Duke of Medina Sidonia had petitioned in vain for his own port of Santa María —was thus unwittingly thrust upon them:

You (of Palos) know well how on account of certain things done and committed by you in default of our service, you were condemned by our Royal Council to serve us for two months with two caravels equipped at your own cost and expense whenever and wherever it should be commanded by us, under certain penalties, all of which is contained at length in said sentence which was pronounced against you. And now inasmuch as we have ordered Christopher Columbus to go with a fleet of three caravels



THE VIRGIN OF LA RÁBIDA

Claimed by the town of Huelva, but who floated down the Rio Tinto to her own monastery



COLUMBUS AT RÁBIDA EXPLAINING HIS GREAT PROJECT TO THE PRIOR AND THE PINZÓN BROTHERS

Unsigned, and supposed to have been painted at La Rábida by one of the monks in the late eighteenth century

through certain parts of the Ocean Sea on some matters in fulfillment of our service and we wish him to take with him the said two caravels therefore we command you that within the first ten days after the reception of this order you shall have said caravels prepared and placed in readiness, and you shall go with him from said length of time henceforward whenever and wherever he shall tell you in our behalf.

In spite of these data as to the intent to punish Palos the Spanish Encyclopedia (*Diccionario Enciclopedico Hispano-Americano*) states the following in its latest edition:

"That the port of Palos was excellent and its seamen the most audacious in Spain at the end of the fifteenth century, is proven by the fact that *Columbus chose* its shipyards for the fitting out of his first expedition to the Indies. No more convincing proof could be asked as to the importance of its naval constructions nor of the high reputation of its mariners."

Poor Columbus! Things were by no means as easy for him as this article would imply. He had nothing to do with determining the place of his departure. As for the naval constructions carried on in Palos they consisted in this case of patching up three very small and aged coast craft. Finally, the audacious seamen showed no eagerness to enlist; only the personal influence of the Pinzóns of near-by Moguer making it possible for Christopher to get together his

little band of ninety men. Daring transatlantic seamen of that day were not stimulated by the offer of a handsome purse as are daring transatlantic airmen of our own times. Even the crown offered no adequate inducement for the risk, but instead hunted through the records for some unlucky seaport which she might penalize, thus turning what should have been considered a glory into a disgrace. Small wonder that there was weeping and wailing and muttered imprecation as the men of Palos went sullenly aboard. Little did the sorrowful wives and mothers dream that the foreign navigator would bring them back again to that very port in the early spring; and still less that many of them would live to see another spectacular entry—when the dare-devil conqueror of the rich Aztec kingdom of Mexico should drop anchor there to report his victory.

The only monument of the little fishing village of Palos is the parish church of San Jorge. Architecturally its one feature is the Mudéjar brick portal recalling that of *San Isidoro del Campo* in Santiponce, near Seville. The interior is devoid of merit. Save for the thick coat of whitewash, it is about the same as when the humble weather-beaten faces of the townsmen turned curiously and unsuspectingly to the pulpit to hear their notary read the royal pragmatic. Here is the notary's deposition of having complied:

Santa Clara and La Rábida

Wednesday, May 23rd, in the year of the birth of Our Saviour Jesus Christ, 1492, being in the church of St. George of this town of Palos, being there present Friar Juan Perez and Christopher Columbus, and also being there present alcaldes and registers, the said Christopher Columbus gave and presented to them this letter from their Majesties which was read by me Franscisco Fernández, notary public of this town.

We summon up the scene. Just where was the Genoese standing? How did he bear the indignant glances of the townsmen as the reading proceeded? Two thirds of his fleet and his crew to be furnished at their cost and risk! It must have seemed monstrous to them, and the Genoese an odious figure.

The present curate of San Jorge was delighted to receive us, and loved to talk about Columbus. He was a simple lad of the town and told us, in that quaint way these isolated folks have of utterly disregarding the lapse of centuries, that he remembered his father saying that Columbus came often to hear Mass at San Jorge—that he preferred it to the convent chapel. Over the unjust misnaming of the new world the *padre* waxed indignant, but found some satisfaction in the fact that at least the main (and only) street in Palos was named Colón; and it was with a pride as real and deep as if it had been contemporary with the great event that he spoke of his

townsman Juan Bermúdez who discovered the islands that bear his name, and of the many other humble mariners of Palos who will forever figure in history. From the sacristy he brought out, carrying her very tenderly in his arms, their one treasure—the alabaster Virgin of the Miracles. Innocent of all intention of hurting his feelings I exclaimed, "Ah, yes! The Virgin of La Rábida to whom Colon was specially devoted!"

"The Virgin of La Rábida? no, señora;" he contradicted warmly, "the Virgin of Palos! It always belonged to Palos. It was brought here, direct to Palos, by a Syrian sea-captain, who begged it for us from the bishop of Jerusalem. It was carved by Saint Luke as you can see. There were great processions the day the Syrian boat made port—June 23, 333. And what miracles the Virgin performed! Then the Moors came" (every miracle-working image found this an unsurmountable reality) "and the priest buried her lest she fall into sacrilegious hands. That was on the day of the Immaculate Conception, Dec. 8th, in the year 719. *Y que coincidencia mas extraordinaria!* In the year 1472, on that same day of the *Imaculada*, the fishermen of Huelva asked their priest if they might cast their nets, their luck having been very poor for nearly a week past. He answered that the Virgin would recognize their necessity and pardon them. Again they caught nothing in their

own river, the Odiel; so they came over here to our side and tried the Tinto. At the very first cast they brought up the long lost Virgin of the Miracles! but alas, the head of Christ was missing. The second throw, however, brought it, too, up from the muddy depths. Amazed at their find they hastened back to Huelva.

But *los nuestros* (our men) who were fishing near, had seen it all and sent our *cura* over to claim the image. *Totál*, a long law-suit. The courts were much perplexed; Huelva fishermen, Palos waters. It seemed there was no solution till the prior of the monastery over yonder had a happy inspiration: he proposed that a great procession should carry the image far up the Tinto, past San Juan, and there it should be taken out in a boat and set afloat amidstream. To whichever side it veered of its own free will, either to the left where Palos lay, or the right where Huelva peeped above the tongue of land that separates the Tinto from the Odiel, to that town the image should belong.

The prior's suggestion was acclaimed with enthusiasm. On the appointed day crowds thronged the banks of the murky Tinto to see which resting place Our Lady should prefer. But when the critical moment came, opposite Palos, neither to one side nor the other did the solitary boat glide, but kept straight on. There was great consternation, and the

fishermen wished to row out and overtake it before it could float out to sea. The prior advised them not to be precipitous—it was still several miles to the open sea. Besides, who could tell but that the Virgin meant, current to the contrary, to glide up the other river, the Odiel, and reach Huelva by the front door, so to speak, instead of the back which looks towards the Tinto. This filled those of Huelva with joy; already they began to claim the image. But *los nuestros* mocked them and said that even though it had passed by Palos without landing they would yet have it again. And so indeed was God's will; for a few miles below, Our Lady deliberately steered her boat to this side and beached directly in front of the monastery of La Rábida. The prior therefore claimed her, and the disputants had to agree that it had been her own choice, openly demonstrated to them all. And with the Franciscans she stayed and continued to perform many miracles; among others the finding of the New World, for there is no doubt that Columbus asked and received her aid. But all this time, she was, in reality, ours; and when evil times fell upon Santa María de la Rábida and all the other monasteries of Spain, the last prior restored her to her original home. And here she is! *Aqui esta!*"

The innocent young curate added that we could learn of the many miracles performed by this image

from an unpublished manuscript called "*De la antiguedad del Convento de la Rábida y de las maravillas y prodigias de la Virgen de los Milagros*" written by one of the Franciscans in 1714; but, alas, he had no idea where the manuscript now reposed; he had merely heard of it from a gentleman who came to study the region a few years before.

On leaving Palos, the road continues through pines and dunes always following the river until the monastery is reached; a low white stucco group on a little eminence, practically on the ocean's edge. A monastery in miniature, humble as should be the home of mendicant Franciscans, and with a simple iron cross outside the gate. Never did nature act more sympathetically to a plain little white monastery: heavenly quiet everywhere, a serious dark mass of stone-pines still and fixed, under them slow moving purplish shadows on the sand, and beyond all, the dancing, sunny sea. This charming point of land was always a sacred spot. Early hermits, pagan or Christian, had a happy faculty for choosing a setting for their meditations; whether the dominant note was to be cold austerity as in Leyre, or warm languor as here, the *mise-en-scène* was always satisfying.

In this case it is uncertain how early the Christians arrived. It is supposed that a pagan shrine stood here,

which, after Constantine's conversion, gave way to a Christian. When the devastating Arian Leovogild was making havoc of Catholic Spain, it is said that the Catholic Spaniards of the region gathered here to pray for his conversion. Legend further has it that while it was still in the power of the Moors, Saint Francis himself came in person and founded the monastery. Authentic history however dates from the reconquest of Andalusia in the middle of the thirteenth century. The spot was given to the Templars whose special mission was to guard the frontier, for only a little to the east in their kingdom of Granada the Moors were still strong. Whether its Arab name, *Rábitha, a fortress or hermitage inhabited by an armed order*, dates from the coming of the Templars, or whether these took over a fortified Mohammedan shrine is unknown.

When the Order of the Templars was suppressed, nay anathematized, by the bull of Pope Clement V in 1311, Franciscans came to occupy the monastery; and these humble friars it was who played host to the wandering mariner and his little son Diego who climbed the knoll and rang at their gate one evening. The year of Columbus' first appearance here is uncertain, also the length of his sojourn; but most investigators place his advent towards the end of 1491.

Likewise there is confusion of opinion as to his

motive. His arrival at this monastery and his finding a spokesman before their majesties in the person of its prior is generally represented as purely fortuitous; dusty, travel-weary foreigner asking his way; hospitable friars, intelligent and interested prior—all essential points in a good readable story. But La Rábida, land's end itself, is not on any highroad. It is now believed that the wayfarer had landed only a few hours before at Huelva, coming from Portugal, so that he was neither travel-worn nor asking his way. If he sailed across the Tinto from Huelva and penetrated the pinewoods to the gate of Santa María de La Rábida, it was with deliberate intention—the intention of consulting a certain monk, Fray Antonio Marchena, whom he had already known as a cartographer in Portugal. He wanted to talk about his great scheme with a sympathizer. To this sympathizer was straightway added another—the Prior of La Rábida, Fray Juan Pérez. The great pity is that any three men so intelligent, so valiant, so eager, should have had to supplicate so shifty a backing as royal favor! But in one single sentence which Columbus has left us, the two Franciscans got undying recompense: "To two poor friars the Catholic Monarchs owed the discovery of the Indies!" Alas that for the Pinzón brothers with whom the "two poor *frailes*" made Christopher acquainted and whom

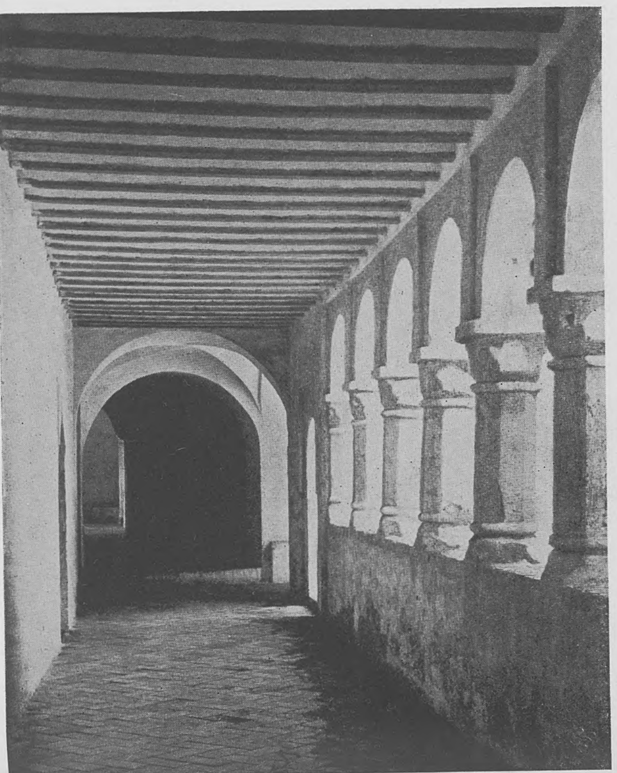
they urged to head the expedition, he should never have written a similar immortal testimonial of gratitude!

More important than the date is the fact that the foreigner entered the patio, unfolded his plans to Padre Antonio Marchena and the prior, and that the prior sent for the *fisico* of Palos, Dr. Garcia Fernández, to come and hear him and for the shipowner Martin Alonso Pinzón and his brother Vicente. After many such reunions in the monastery, Prior Juan Pérez himself rode out from La Rábida for the royal headquarters at Santa Fé, where Fernando and Isabel were besieging the Moorish capital of Granada, and pleaded with them to grant another interview to his protégé. This granted, Columbus, finely mounted and in new raiment, sallied forth from his erstwhile convent home and arrived at his destination in time to witness the triumphal entry of the Spanish troops into Granada. Shortly after, he and their majesties signed the contract of Santa Fé, "the most momentous paper monarch ever put pen to." Then he came back to La Rábida and prepared to go out on "the Sea of Darkness."

Because of these associations La Rábida should have been considered a priceless heritage by Spaniards, no matter what they might come to think in time of the monastic institution *per se*. Yet it was not



LA RÁBIDA, WHERE COLUMBUS SOJOURNED, OVERLOOKING THE ATLANTIC



THE DIMINUTIVE CLOISTER THAT THE IMPATIENT MARINER USED TO PACE



THE CROSS PLACED OUTSIDE THE WALLS OF LA RÁBIDA TO COMMEMORATE COLUMBUS' DISCOVERY

exempted from the Dissolution Act of 1835. Politicians hardly knew of its existence; and of course it was not to be expected that in backward Spain, and in the early nineteenth century at that, the women of the region were going to form a "Daughters of the Discovery Society" and devote themselves to protecting and reclaiming Columbian headquarters in Spain. After the friars filed out, the historic monument was virtually abandoned. The last prior and one lay brother remained to prevent pillage by the impious of the region, but even their presence could not defer the inexorable state order for dismantling the monastery. A crucifix, a few saints in carved wood, and the alabaster Virgin of the Miracles, were all they managed to secrete from the officers who came to make an inventory. The Virgin, as we have seen, was deposited in the church of *San Jorge* in Palos. (Just requital, he of *San Jorge* would interject!) Then the prior left his home. It was rented out by its new proprietor, the government, as a stable, and when the first tenant gave it up, the half-savage denizens of the pine woods began to tear out the *artesonados* for firewood. The place was soon a sorry wreck. In 1845 the deputy for the province of Huelva saw it and was moved to make a stirring appeal to Cortes for its preservation. His proposal that it be instantly reclaimed and made into an asylum for

aged seamen was received with fervor in the capital, but the rest of the story merely repeats that of every good proposal made in the Spanish parliament—it was promptly forgotten.

Meanwhile the process of labefaction went on. Official attention being again called to it, the ruler of Spain made up her mind to put La Rábida where it could not bother the government again. Isabel II, of unenviable memory, sent an order to the mayor of Moguer to "level the ruins of the monastery, to sell whatever building material was salable, and out of the proceeds to put up a commemorative tablet on the spot." This characteristically stupid, even wicked, royal command, the *alcalde* chose not to obey; that is, he treated it with true Spanish dilatoriness, so that when the benefactor of Andalusia, the Duc de Montpensier, passed that way three years later (1854), La Rábida was still standing. This prince, fifth son of Louis Philippe of France, was the husband of Queen Isabel's sister, and a general in the Spanish army. As said, he did much for Andalusia. One hopes his conscience prompted him to make good, though it could be only in infinitesimal measure, the iniquitous despoiling which Spain had suffered at the hands of his countrymen earlier in the century. At any rate he was touched by the pathetic condition of La Rábida, and gave three hundred dollars towards

patching up the leaky roof. Unfortunately some of the money was spent on burying the original Mudéjar brick cloister under thick whitewash.

By 1875 the buildings were again in dire need of repair. A mammoth subscription was contributed to, principally in the New World; but it was destined mostly to a colossal monumental shaft to Columbus. To want something brand new and grandiose alongside the humble little old building that was so intimately connected with the great mariner and his achievement, was essentially Spanish. Neither the authors of the scheme, nor the subscribers, were capable of perceiving that posterity, even materialistic posterity, could be more thrilled by standing in the very cell where Christopher Columbus had slept or in the little "rest room" where he and the prior had discussed his project with Alonso Pinzón and Garcia Fernández when they dropped in, or in the little cloister where he used to walk and map out an ambitious future, than by gazing upon a consummate banality of bad art in the shape of a "colossal" shaft that tries to make the splendid pines look petty.

The gentleman chosen to design this commemoration was a professor of architecture and an erudite member of the Royal Academy of San Fernando, in Madrid. They say he could recite forwards and back-

wards every ruler of Egypt from the first dim dawn of history down to Alexander's invasion. The logical conclusion was that he was just the man to save La Rábida for the world. Insusceptible to the brooding charm of the place, he cut down a considerable number of old pines to make room for his column; and designed in conjunction with it a French garden whose lay-out necessitated the clearing of another area. A lovely, lonely grove of that classic flavor peculiar to pine groves that overlook the Mediterranean was converted into a miniature French garden, the *grand genre* ill-interpretated, skimped, and, through lack of funds for maintenance, straightway left a prey to dinginess. And this in Andalusia, the one corner of Europe that could furnish ancient prototypes of the exquisitely secluded, aromatic Moorish garden! But even this sort would have been sacrilege. La Rábida in its poignant abandonment among the pines was perfect in its way. Spain has spoiled it. Worse still, she would do the same thing over again to-morrow in similar circumstances.

The only comfort to be extracted from the Rábida affair is that the monument never having been completed, its shaft is tottering and there is reason to hope that it will soon fall. Meanwhile the unplaced prow of a ship that was to crown it lies in fragments on the ground in grass-grown confusion, and the sculptor's

plaster model, also falling to bits, long cluttered up the little cloister of the monastery. If we have spoken at length of this misspent energy at La Rábida it is only to warn our sentimental countrymen who subscribe dollars every time a well-meant but misguided appeal is made in the United States for money to preserve it. There are innumerable large fortunes in Spain, sufficient to reclaim all the historic ruins in the land, if patriotism were commensurate with wealth. What the country lacks within herself is not funds, but taste and generous patriotism; and after that, the iron determination to wrench those enterprises that require good taste out of the hands of pilfering politicians or dry-as-dust professors of architecture.

And the little monastery itself? Was the restoring hand of the distinguished Egyptologist laid heavily upon it also? Not so heavily as on the pine grove, and yet one wishes that it might have been stayed. A brand new appearance was inevitable; even the great Viollet-le-Duc left a modern polish on Carcassonne. The archæologist is seldom artistic. When work was begun on La Rábida, shortly before the four-hundredth Columbian celebration, things were in a bad way. Since it had been miserably patched up and heavily whitewashed with the Montpensier money in the fifties it had again fallen to pieces. As the laudable purpose of the next restoration was to

give it the aspect it wore when greatness was so unexpectedly thrust upon it, the architect had to reckon also with the Baroque reforms of the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. These consisted, among other things, in having ceiled the church nave with a plaster vault that obscured the original decorated wooden ceiling—the same barbarity that was perpetrated in the Mosque of Córdova and, almost worse, in the Cathedral of Teruel, where an elaborate Gothic ceiling with historic scenes of the fourteenth century has not yet been uncovered. If important cathedral chapters could do this, small wonder that the prior of little La Rábida followed suit. Nor did he stop there; he pierced the stone vault of the sanctuary with a trivial cupola and lantern. All these matters must be taken into consideration when we judge the restoration. If it is all too new-looking, if it has lost the charm of age and wear and tear, it is nevertheless useful to a student of Mudéjar art.

This style, it has been explained, was created by Moorish artizans working for Christians. At La Rábida, the first evidence of it is found in the entrance itself—a stilted brick arch, not horseshoe however, resting on eight-sided brick columns of the sort seen at Guadalupe. The open vestibule to which this leads is where Columbus must have waited after ringing; but now the inner vestibule is open as well;

no prior's permission need be sought before proceeding through a second portal. Here Mudéjar brick gives way to Gothic stone, and these are the alternatives we find all through the little edifice. The court beyond the Gothic portal was the *patio de la hospederia*, or guests' patio. The covered walk which converts the little quadrangle into a true cloister was not added until the seventeenth century, so that it is not until we pass into the friars' *patio* or *clausura* that we get the real Columbian atmosphere.

More diminutive it could hardly be; even smaller than San Pablo in Barcelona, which is usually quoted as the smallest of old Spanish cloisters. Mudéjar everywhere—brick arches, brick columns to uphold them, and bright color on the walls; but what we take to be the ubiquitous Andalusian wainscoting of old *azulejos* or colored tiles is only simulated; the apparent tiles are imitations painted flat on that adamantine *yeso* or stucco which the Moors knew how to polish until it looked vitrified. Here in the cloister this painted decoration is only fragmentary but much more of the same sort will be seen in the church. As compared with the actual baked tiles which were and are extraordinarily cheap in Andalusia, the tedious process of imitating them in fresco must have been expensive. Was it another case of employing enforced Mohammedan labor to expiate

its crime of adhering to the Crescent instead of the Cross? The restoring architect does not think so, and, on second thought, the date is too late after the reconquest. Having noted in the frieze certain Italian themes, the restorer believes that the great navigator himself, finding time hang heavy on his hands, repaid the monks' hospitality by decorating their humble little cloister. Columbus wrote in one of his many, many letters to the sovereigns that he was skilled in drawing maps and placing cities, rivers, islands and ports, in their proper places. What more natural, asks the restorer, than that he should have painted little Renaissance Arabesques on the cloister wall?

Around the diminutive patio of the friars are grouped the usual units and all on the same small scale—church, refectory, cells and reception room, or *recibidor*. This last chamber is, no doubt, where most of the momentous confabulations were held, for the so-called "cell of Padre Marchena" on the second floor which some hold to have been the scene of the meetings, was more likely a library than a cell. Besides, why should good weighty Spaniards have taken the trouble to climb to the second story when there was a cool, chatty *recibidor* on the first? We are sure that neither Prior Juan Pérez nor Fray Antonio Marchena would have asked so much physical effort of Pinzón and Dr. Fernández after these

had come all the way from Palos! But the probability that the great project was gone over again and again in the lower *recibidor* failed to sanctify it in modern eyes. Not an object that it then contained was saved—not a table, a chair, a book, an ink-well. Bare as a dungeon, save for an eighteenth century table which fails to evoke, in one who recognizes it as such, any picture of the would-be mariner of the fifteenth drumming it impatiently as the days passed on in talk and talk and more talk. But we recall that Christopher too was a wordy soul, so perhaps instead of impatiently drumming the table he merely drew up his bulky *frailero* (the prototype of our mission chair) and indulged his own *furor loquendi* with as much zest as he later, once the great deed was an accomplished act, indulged his *furor scribendi.*

From the cloister one may pass at the northeast corner into the church; but more interesting is the entrance from the guests' patio, for there we find the sign manual of the Moor—a horseshoe arch. Two of them in fact, the first of brick, very stilted and pointed, and the second of stone and lower. (Both forms can be found a little to the north in the very picturesque town of Niebla, which still retains its Arab walls). The freshly decorated *artesonado* over the nave seems to jump out at one even in the dim religious light of the church interior. After examining

the mellowed old examples of Córdoba and Seville, and no one should miss them, this ceiling looks crude indeed; but after all, its predecessor was fairly new when Columbus raised his eyes to it, and had it been preserved in all its pristine freshness, it too would have looked garish to our modern, over-refined sight. Artistically the best the church holds is the large wooden crucifix restored to its original place over the altar. This and the Virgin are Gothic, and the statues of several saints, slightly later in period.

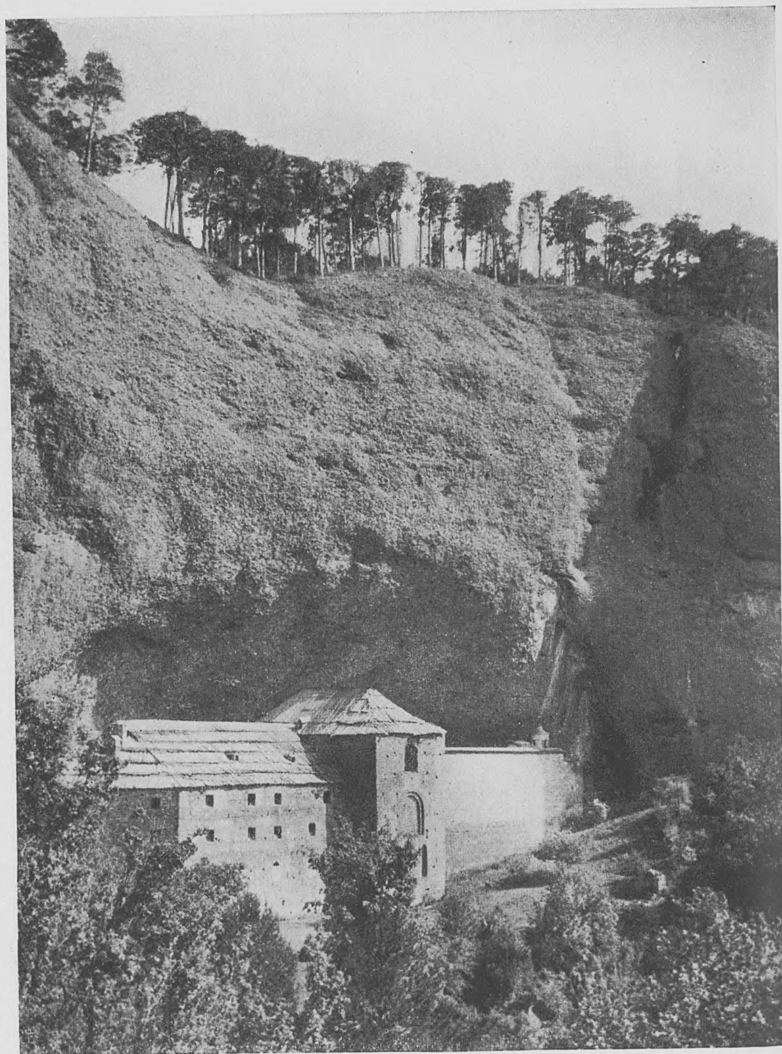
In 1924 the Franciscans took possession of La Rábida, never, it is to be hoped, to leave; nor are they the sole guardians, the Sociedad Columbina of Huelva having appropriated a few cells where they are gathering interesting Columbiana together as the nucleus of a little library. Fitting it is that the convent should be inhabited again by friars even though they come so sadly late. True, they can never restore the broken spell, but the convent will lose the ghastliness of dismantlement, and the world will be comforted to know that they are keeping watch again in what was once the home of living men—very living, for their hopes were projected into a New World at a time when other men believed that the Old was the whole.

From the upper rooms and the open loggia there is a succession of fine views; far out to sea, or across the



Photograph by Hielscher

A FRANCISCAN SCHOOL FOR FUTURE MONKS



THE ROYAL MONASTERY OF SAN JUAN DE LA PEÑA (CLIFF) UNDER THE PYRENEES
It served as a mausoleum of the early kings of Aragón before Poblet was founded

Tinto to Huelva, or beyond the pine tops to Moguer; but mostly it is a water view, moving, restless water, flowing off to the unknown and inviting one's dreams to follow it. No wonder the simple *frailes* who used to listen to the ambitious Genoese caught something of his unquenchable faith in the New World in the west.

VII

THE ROYAL MONASTERY OF SIGENA

VII

THE ROYAL MONASTERY OF SIGENA

SARAGOSSA (Zaragoza) is the nearest large centre to this monastery but unfortunately no highroad connects the two. By going farther north on the railroad to Huesca, one finds a tolerable inn and can hire a motor; the distance to Sariñena, a town close to Sigena, is about fifty kilometres, and the road is good. Huesca in itself offers a few interesting mediæval monuments. An alternative would be Lérida, now that Lérida has become an important town because of the electricity plant of the Compañia Canadiense, and has provided a hotel for the employees thereof; it is much more distant, some eighty kilometres from the monastery, but the highroad through Fraga is good, motors are easily obtained, and Lérida itself is well worth visiting. Either route would be preferable to the one to be described, followed in war time when motors and horses were almost impossible of hire. The visit must be completed in a day, as neither the town of Sariñena, nor much less the poor little hamlet of Sigena, possesses a hostelry worthy of the name.

The ancient royal monastery or as we say, convent, of Sigena is on the border between Aragon and Catalonia and is reached from Sariñena, on the northern or Lérida division of the Zaragoza-Barcelona railroad.

We left the train at Tardienta, not because it was near our destination but because it was a larger town than Sariñena and therefore more likely to provide a night's lodging. But logic may go far amiss in these matters. Tardienta is the junction whence a line starts out due north into the Pyrenees; it has a fair Mudéjar steeple; but it has no inn. In fact it is an unnecessarily squalid place, its dirt beginning at the very exit of the station. On asking the woman in charge of the railroad restaurant if there was nothing better than the *Casa de Huespedes* across the way, she said she had recently furnished a little house in the main street where we might stay. It proved to be clean and quiet; in fact we were the only occupants, and were locked in all night. Her bed was certainly better than her board which we shared, over in the buffet, with the *guardias civiles* and railroad employees. *Ay de mi!* what an abundance of the classic garlic hailed our entrance into Catalonia!

By "making night" as they say, in Tardienta, and catching the first morning train east, we hoped to visit the monastery and get on to Lérida that afternoon. From Sariñena station a public *tartana* ran to Sariñena town, two miles back; and from the town a diligence was ready to start for Sigena, back another ten miles. But it would not return that day, they told us, and there was no hostelry at the monastery;

nor would a hired *tartana* bring us back in time for the afternoon train. It seemed as if our precautionary stop at Tardienta was to avail us nothing after all!

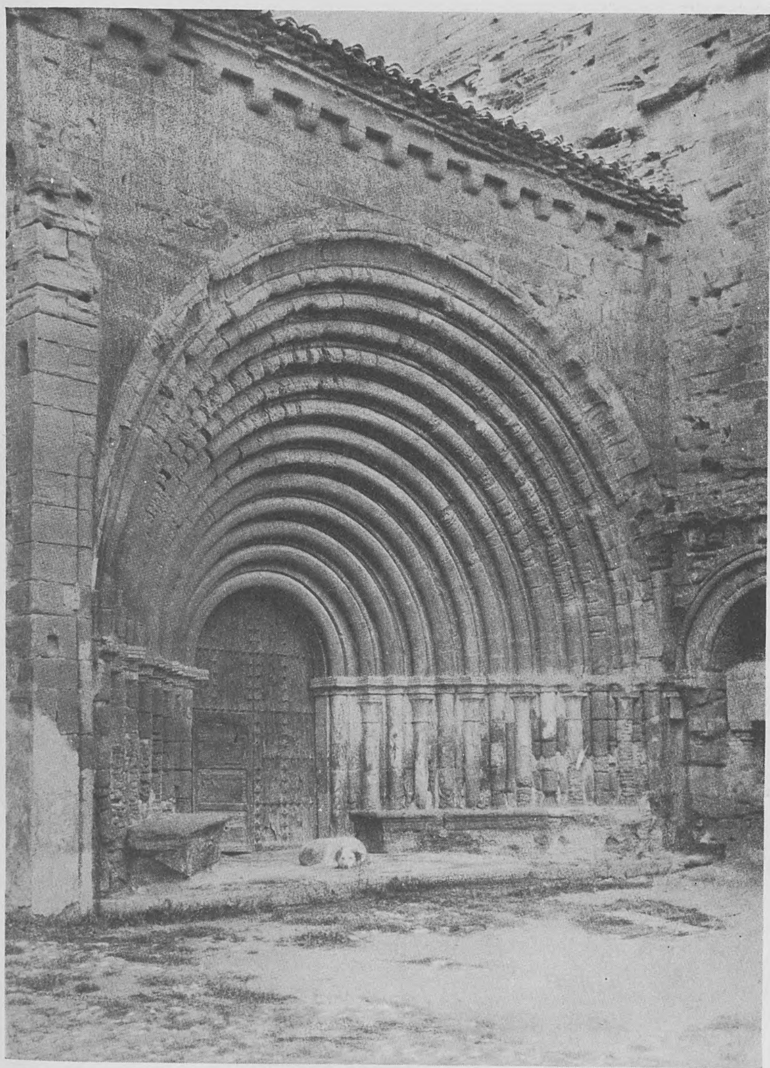
"Has no one in this town an auto for hire?" we asked the bystanders. All eyes turned to one, a portly man who had driven up from the station with us. He nodded encouragingly and said "*Vamos a ver*," then to his son who had come to the plaza to welcome him home, "Get the auto ready and take these foreigners to the monastery." To us, "It will cost you thirty pesetas." Never in Spain was a difficulty disposed of more expeditiously.

It turned out that he was a grain dealer who motored all over that region buying the harvest before it was cut. His auto looked a little wobbly, and when I asked dubiously if it was in good order he dispatched the question with the same promptitude as before. "Señora, if it is God's will that the auto break on the road it will break and nothing can prevent. Take your seats."

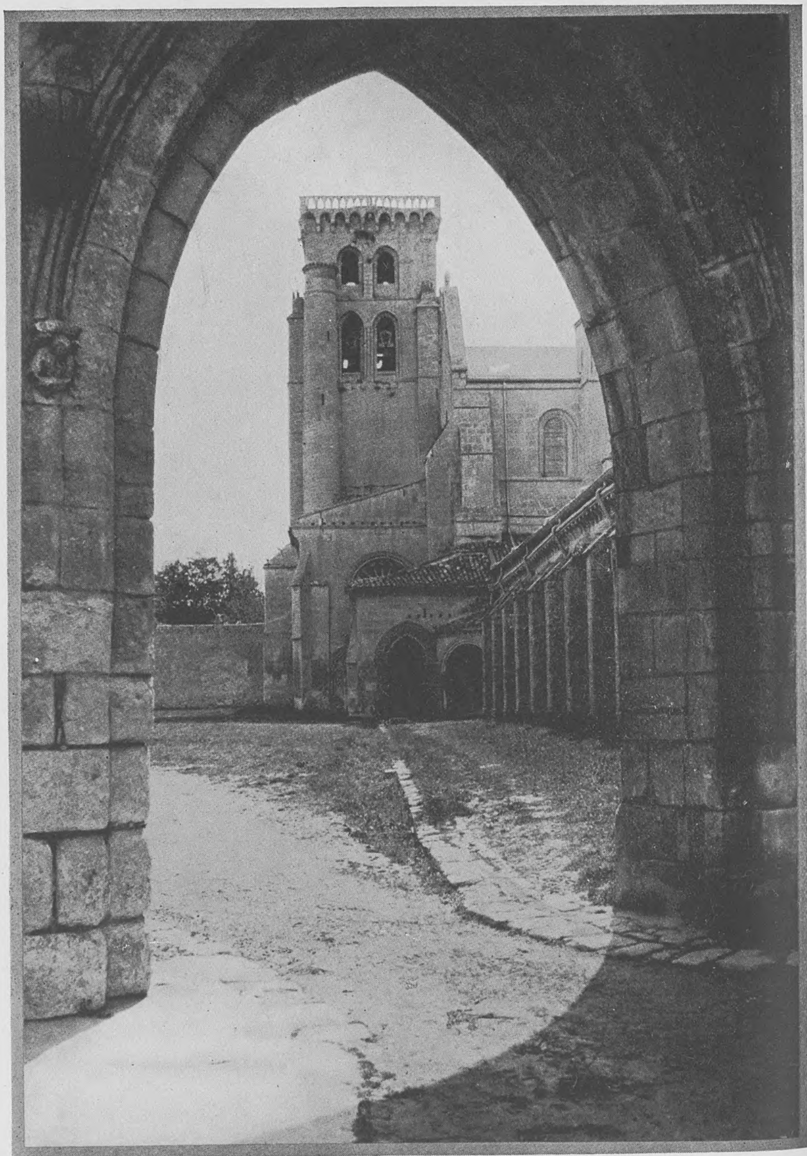
Break it did not, but it skidded perilously close to the edge of a precipice. There was a slow drizzle now, following a day of heavy rain. After nearly an hour and a half of the sloppy highway the grain merchant's son halted at a point where a narrow muddy road straggled off to one side and told us we must walk the remaining mile as he could not risk his machine in

that country lane. So we left him on the highway and braved the mud and drizzle, and came at last upon the semi-circular apses of the convent church, typical Romanesque with round-topped windows embraced between little columns. Beyond the chevet, however, the pile failed to compose satisfactorily; contrary to our expectation, the conventual buildings were not fortress-like and battlemented as at Guadalupe, but passing the apse and entering a court the artistic eye had cause to brighten.

In the long south façade of the church was set the most imposing Romanesque portal I had ever seen—no carving, just reveal after reveal of plain three-quarter mould section, fourteen of them in all. On the other side of the court were the aged stone dwellings that make up the hamlet of Sigena, with stables on the ground floor and outside stairs to reach the living rooms above. Connecting these with the church was an irregular jumble made up of rectory and prioress' palace, while in the centre of the court stood a very old moss-covered stone cross. This little settlement, we learned later, had once been enclosed by a stout wall from which rose several fortified towers—the very composition we had rightly expected to find; and the well-built stone houses that now shelter peasants used to shelter the convent proctor, the doctor, the pharmacist and other necessary males.



THE DEEP-SET PORTAL OF SIGENA



THE CLOISTER OF LAS HUELGAS, CONTEMPORANEOUS WITH SIGENA, BUILT BY THE ENGLISH ELEANOR OF LANCASTER

From this portion of the monastery the public is not excluded

Here we were as far as the deep-set portal, only to find it closed. Not having heard that the convent had lately been put under *clausura* by the bishop of Lérida we had come unprovided with episcopal permit; even so, we expected to see the church, since it serves as *parroquia* to the laborers who till the convent land; but no, the priest to whom we appealed and who was confessor to the nuns, said it could not be opened for visitors without special permission of the lady prioress. So crestfallen were we that he took pity on us and offered to lead us to that formidable personage. Across a high-walled court, up a steep stair we followed him, then into the barn-like reception-room of the ancient palace. The barred door had been opened by a portress tall, bent, old, fantastically frocked, a very piece of mediævalism. The striking feature of the conventual costume was the voluminous head-gear, of white crépe pinned in and out and everywhere with a hundred pins to form a large bosse or button over the forehead. On my admiring it its wearer took from a *vargueño* drawer a few faded photographs made on the occasion of royal visits, to show me that there were two types of coif, old and new. The later manner of pinning, she said, had been recently (1880!) introduced by refugee French nuns and had received episcopal sanction; but she, she was

happy to add, had always preferred the older Spanish arrangement.

"We are Sanjuanistas," proudly announced the cracked old voice.

"Sanjuanistas," I repeated, "female branch of the Military Order of St. John of Jerusalem?"

"Ya, ya. As the señora knows, being a person of culture, the Sanjuanistas were an expansion of the Templars, an Order always befriended by this kingdom of Aragon. Not far from this very spot, in Monzón, stands the strong castle given them by Ramón Berenguer in 1143; and when the wicked council of Paris condemned them so unjustly of practising the black arts many of them escaped from France into Aragon and were harbored in spite of the disapproval of the Holy Father. Si, señora!"

"We Sanjuanistas have heavy obligations," she added. "For instance, we must rush off at once whenever called to the Holy Lands to nurse the Crusaders," she explained, as if presaging that the flower of European youth would soon again be trooping down to Palestine to wrest Christ's sepulchre from the Infidel. But no! it must be that she was living back in the Middle Ages. I doubt if she knew that the Great War was in progress; that Christians were fighting fiercely at that moment up in Flanders, not for an empty tomb but to save their own homes

and wives and children from other Christians who were violating them.

And still we waited in doubt as to whether the abbess would receive us, and still the old portress expatiated on the virtues of the nuns whose faded photographs she had brought out.

"Our superiora died four years ago," she informed us, "and this nun has taken her place. I was with the mother when she died. A very holy woman! I am sure she went direct to heaven without passing through any intermediate stage. Ah! that I might be permitted by Divine Grace to do the same! I love to be with them when they die, and note their last words and gestures. Now this one, who as you say has the face of a saint, she was extremely weak; in fact, she had no illness, she was merely too weak to live; and yet at the last moment she summoned strength to sit up and bow three times. I knew then that she saw Our Lord and was making a reverence to Him. This one," pointing to another youngish face in the photograph, "she broke into laughter at the last moment and clapped her hands for joy, and thus she passed. She must have seen the gates of paradise thrown open. Look you, *Padre*," and she turned to the confessor, "hadn't she the face of an angel? You remember her—you confessed her many a time."

The priest, busy rolling a cigarette, shrugged his

shoulder indifferently; then on second thought, glanced at the photograph and grudgingly assented. His lack of enthusiasm was not resented by the nun, only by myself.

For fully three quarters of an hour we were kept waiting, during which the portress's volubility never waned. Then the mother superior and an attendant nun came, sweeping long black trains behind them. At once we realized what had caused the delay: it had taken all that time to place the thousand pins in the august lady's marvellous white coif, much more elaborate than that of the portress. Little, bent-over, with a long nose and pointed chin, her white face lined in all directions with fine wrinkles, an Aragonese, I fancy, and altogether an aristocrat. Later we learned that here, as everywhere, there are patricians and plebes; the former pay a thousand dollars for the privilege of passing their lives in this sad and solitary spot, the latter, only two hundred and fifty; these become portresses, cooks, and general servants. The lady nuns wear on their breast the full red cross of the Templars, *appliquée*, the sword in the form of a cross embroidered in crimson silk, which Baroness Aulnoy describes; while the servants wear only three points of the cross—*cruces* and *media cruces*, they are designated amongst themselves. Two of our hostesses were, therefore, *crosses*—the

superiora and her lady companion, while the portress wore merely a half-cross; but between them there appeared to be no social disparity. The portress never thought of withdrawing when the noble abbess appeared but went on chatting freely with the others in a triple effort to entertain us.

Fortunately from the first we made a good impression. The long list of convents already visited probably spoke in our favor. Also our familiarity with Sigena's history and its architectural attractions, especially the two very old decorated wooden ceilings it contained—one in the upper council-room or *sala prioral* and one in the chapter-room or *sala capitular.* On our mentioning these the swathed, wrinkled face of the abbess of Sigena brightened and she said we might see the church and the *sala prioral.* In fact she promised that we should partake of a *refresco* up there. "And the cloister and the *sala capitular?*"

She was so sorry, but they were included in the *clausura.* "*Bueno . . . pues . . .*," seeing on our faces the expression that had moved even the impassive priest, "since you have come so far to honor us by a visit, I will arrange it. Of course if we were under *clausura papal* I would have to send to Rome for permission, but as it is merely a case of *clausura episcopal* I can at least have the door thrown open

that leads across the cloister and into the chapter room, and from there you can examine the ceiling—though it will be somewhat dark; and on no account may your foot, nor even the tip of it, cross the threshold into the cloister for that would violate the *clausura*."

And thus it was that peering from the church into the shadowy depths of the chill empty *sala capitular* we caught a surreptitious glimpse of the famous painted ceiling. Its form is not uncommon in Catalonia, whence Aragon took its architecture after the political union of the two regions. In Barcelona, the chapel of Saint Agatha and the grand hall of the *Diputación* have ceilings of the same family—lengthwise beams resting on a series of stone arches thrown across a long hall; but the Aragonese example offers this peculiarity, that not only the wooden beams but also the stone arches are embellished with gold and color. In the spandrels and soffits of the arches is the genealogy of Christ, and on the walls scenes from His life. The painting, now impaired in spots by moisture, is said to have been executed in the reign of Don Jaime II of Aragon (1291–1327), by Sicilian artists. As a third of the population of Sicily was Arab at that time it is probable that the imported decorators as well as the Spanish carpenters who made the ceiling at Sigena were Mudéjares (Mohammedans living under Christian rule). The ceiling in question was

paid for, *costed*, as one may say in Spanish, by the royal *priora* Doña Blanca, daughter of the monarch just mentioned; and so was the monumental throne, or prioress' seat, which we had seen years before in the Episcopal Museum of Lérida and which used to stand in the nuns' choir here at Sigena. As Mudéjar as the ceiling, it may be the work of the same artists, though it is so like other Spanish bits—from Gradefes and Moguer, for example—that no Sicilian need have lent a hand in its making. One way or another, Spanish convents could always command cunning Eastern craftsmen in the early days. A document in the convent archives, dated 1258, mentions the selling of a Moor by the prioress of Sigena.

To be denied entrance to the *sala capitular* and the cloister from which it opened was indeed a disappointment. It came to me, as we peered in, that all I had ever read of Sigena's notable art treasures centred around this spot. I asked where the famous alabaster Entombment was, which I knew by photograph and which so much resembled the Entombment in polychrome wood in San Jerónimo in Granada. It was in the little chapel opening north of the chapter-room. And the polychrome alabaster *retablo* of Santa Ana? The chapel of Santa Ana opened off the cloister beyond the chapter-house. And the painted *retablo* of Santa Waldesca? The chapel dedicated to that saint

also gave on to the cloister and could not be shown. And the gem of all the convent's possessions, the *retablo* by the Sienese-like Catalan Luis Borrassá? That was in the Chapel of the Forsaken, out there in the cloister too; but it was incomplete. To raise money for certain repairs they had been forced to sell two of its panels. Only too true! After Sanpere y Miquel made the painter in question famous by publishing in 1906 *Los Cuatrocentistas Catalanes* everyone who owned a Borrassá could not only repair an old roof but build a new one!

But clausura is clausura, even though only episcopal, not papal. We had to content ourselves with noting that the cloister had vaulted walks, no carved capitals, and a rather sad-looking garden out in the centre. I suppose there must have been a well, and it must have had an iron hood over it, but we could not see it. Nor did we get a glimpse of the cypress so valuable in a cloister composition. Our *cicerones* consoled us with the assurance that the whole church was free to us, even the nuns' choir with the image of the Virgin; so thither we reluctantly turned our steps.

But the church was a picture of artistic desolation. Stripped of so many of its great works of art, their absence makes all the more evident the unwise alterations in the simple old Romanesque plan of three naves, transept, and three semi-circular apses. One of

these last was ruthlessly torn away in 1780 in order to build the *panteón de las religiosas*, which holds a good deal of trashy art, and still earlier a *Capilla de la Trinidad* had been added to the south transept, and somewhere else a *Capilla de la Concepción*, all of which we were expected to admire. The chancel wall, once covered with fourteenth-century frescoes, had been picked to provide a tooth, so to speak, for a coat of plastering scored to imitate heavy blocks, but fortunately one scene had escaped—an Entombment of much archaic charm.

Sigena's *chef d'oeuvre* had been its *retablo mayor*, but its place was vacant. Begun in 1320 under the prioress Doña Teresa Ximénez de Urrea and finished under her namesake Doña Maria a century or so later, it was considered an epitome of Catalan and Aragonese polychrome art, sculptured and painted. They should have made every effort to keep it intact, but, "*las necesidades de la casa*"—and the old prioress shook her head resignedly. Four of its panels are in the Provincial Museum of Huesca, which, like most provincial museums, is difficult of access; the rest have been sold out of Spain. After hearing all these sorry tales of spoliation it seemed a miracle that the royal pantheon should still retain its retable. The day the nuns decide to sell it, its beautiful panels will bring money enough into the treasury

to rebuild the whole monastic fabric from the ground up!

("*Carramba!*" later ejaculated our *chofer*, son of the grain merchant, when we referred to their being obliged to sell so many works of art. "Sigena is one of the richest religious communities in Spain. They hold a million pesetas worth of government bonds!")

To hear from the lips of *la superiora* the name of each mouldered occupant of the royal tombs was less gratifying aesthetically than it would have been to contemplate a fine series of Catalan and Aragonese primitives. The royal tombs failed to fix the attention and I found myself following the movements of a lovely young nun who, oblivious of our presence, went prostrating herself prayerfully from image to image.

Leaving the church we ascended to the prioress' hall to see the other decorated wooden ceiling of our quest. This, they told us, had lain hidden since the late eighteenth century under a sham plaster vault covered with florid frescoes by a Carthusian monk from a near-by monastery. They said he was an excellent painter, and it had been a pity to rip out his work, but when they showed me his stupid portraits of all the dead and gone abbesses, I had no regrets for the plaster ceiling. The one it had been hiding is particularly interesting because its form is a true

barrel-vault carried out in wood. But all three of the good ladies who conducted us went on talking at once, unrestrained by the fact that I had drawn out a note-book and was endeavouring to jot down the color scheme. What an easy time professional interviewers would have had with them! Without a single question on my part, they told me everything, and I felt moreover that they were having a most pleasant time. Presently wine and convent-baked cakes were brought in. All attempts at note-taking had to be given up, and I resigned myself to playing the guest with good grace. As we sipped, the talk went on; veritable effusions of convent history. Biographies of the abbesses whose portraits hung in the priory were given in detail; and of course the history of the abbey itself. A royal foundation, by the pious Doña Sancha (Sancta) daughter of Alfonso VII of León and Castile and wife of Alfonso II of Aragón and Catalonia. Begun in 1183. In April, 1188, the sovereigns rode out from Huesca for the consecration, and with them thirteen noble-born Aragonese and Catalan ladies to take the vows of the Order of St. John. Likewise the queen's little daughter Dulce, aged seven, that same day took the veil. And the queen ceded many villages and their inhabitants to the first prioress in vassalage; and the king gave her fifteen thousand maravedis in gold; nor was this all: with further

generosity he made over to her the tribute money paid by Jews and Moors in certain large towns of his realms. "And so you see," finished the prioress, "what a great income Sigena started out with, and what an important post the abbess held who administered this wealth. Now, we can scarcely keep a roof over our heads!" and all three shook their voluminous white headresses slowly and sadly from side to side.

This consecration date, 1188, makes Sigena contemporaneous with the Cistercian nunnery of Las Huelgas, near Burgos, founded by Sancha's brother Alfonso VIII of Castile, and his wife Eleanor, daughter of Henry II of England. Both remain but little altered from their primitive form and are still typical specimens of a twelfth-century monastic house for women—church, cloister, residence for the abbess, refectory, dormitory, warehouses—all pretty much as they have been from the beginning. Sigena's painted ceilings came a century later, embellishments offered by royal inmates as proven by the lilies of the royal Blanche of Aragon, abbess in the late thirteenth century. (Moorish carpentry, I took time to note in spite of my too attentive hostesses, with typical stars and interlacings, and great brackets carved into fish-heads).

One of the most stupid and disagreeable pictures



Photograph by Mas

THE ABBESS AND LADY NUNS OF THE ORDER OF ST. JOHN OF JERUSALEM, SIGENA
Wearing their mediaeval head-dress, long trains, and the Cross of the Knights of St. John on their shoulders



PORTRAIT BY ZURBURÁN OF THE COUNTESS OF MONTEREY
The founder of the Dominican Convent of Salamanca commending her Nuns to the care of the Virgin



IN THE CISTERCIAN CLOISTER OF SAN ANDRÉS

on the wall, by the Carthusian monk, I suppose, was a brownish bull snorting about in the centre of a still more brownish landscape. Of course we had to hear all about that. It depicted the *raison d'être* of the convent itself—the finding of an image of the Virgin (now cherished in the nuns' choir) on the very spot where the convent stands. And of course the *dramatis personae* were a cowherd and the brown bull mentioned above. Time, the twelfth century. The fabulous *toro* contracted the odd habit of wandering off daily by himself and not returning till nightfall. Following him one day, the curious cowherd found that he directed his steps to a large boulder in the centre of a large field and there knelt to pray; closer examination revealed an image of the Virgin in a niche of the rock —an image hidden as usual, long before, from the invading Moors. The awe-struck peasant told the priest, and the priest told the bishop, and the bishop told the king, and the king told his holy and pious spouse, Doña Sancha, who at once saw her duty and erected a monastery on the spot signalled by the knowing bull. To guard the image, the queen called together the first women of the Order of St. John of Jerusalem. Thus the legend, cherished as gospel truth by the good ladies of Sigena who pass their lives as sentinels to the apocryphal and undeniably thirteenth-century image, and hold themselves "always

ready to go at a moment's notice to nurse wounded crusaders in the Holy Lands!"

"The Virgin has often performed miracles for us," recounted the *superiora* gratefully. "When the *coro* ceiling fell, her divine intervention caused the event to take place at night when we were in our beds, so that not one of us was injured."

The visit over, we took leave of the three nuns down in the ancient church, or at least in their arm of it beyond which they dared not pass. Remembering the necessities of the house we said we would like to leave a few dollars "for the poor" (we always word it that way), and asked the mother whether we were to hand it to the portress or to the priest who stood by rolling another cigarette. She seemed to think it would be better in the portress's hands.

We repeated our *adios*, and our thanks for their simple friendliness. The door swung behind us and the portress drew the heavy bolt, leaving them in that grim stone prison which they could never leave, even in death, while we went forth into a bright and cheerful world which was, according to our pagan senses, to be taken in, not shut out.

Since that day we have talked to a writer whose only sister died in Sigena—perhaps one of those whose dramatic passing was detailed to me by the

portress. He begged to see her at the last moment, but *clausura* forbade it; nor could he see her dead; that too was forbidden. The prioress, pitying his grief, engaged him in place of the regular convent grave-digger and pall-bearer, and instructed the nuns in charge of the dead to leave the casket open for him to close. Thus the grief-stricken brother had one more glimpse of the sister who had voluntarily exchanged the warmth and the humanizing joys of family for the chilly life of meditation and prayer within the prison-like mole of Sigena.

VIII
SANTA MARIA DE POBLET

VIII

SANTA MARIA DE POBLET

BEST visited from Reus, an important manufacturing city on the southern, or express branch of the Madrid-Barcelona Line. The monastery lies some forty kilometres to the north, and the excursion is easily made in a day by motor or by train, this latter on the short Tarragona-Lérida Road which passes through Reus, uniting the southern and northern arms of the main line. Lunch should be taken along. Should the traveller prefer either of these two very interesting and picturesque termini—Tarragona or Lérida—to the bustling Reus he would have convenient service, for Espluga lies exactly half-way between the two.

Catalan roads are good for motoring.

Sometimes, not often, a *tartana* can be picked up outside the station for the two and a half miles to Santa Maria de Poblet. Otherwise, one crosses the tracks, scrambles over a sprawling brook and thus makes a short cut to the highway. Thence it is easy walking between tree-bordered vineyards. On reaching the Baroque entrance, a crumbling arch, one turns into a shady avenue and continues about three-quarters of a mile to the monastery portal.

For a two-day visit rooms are available at the

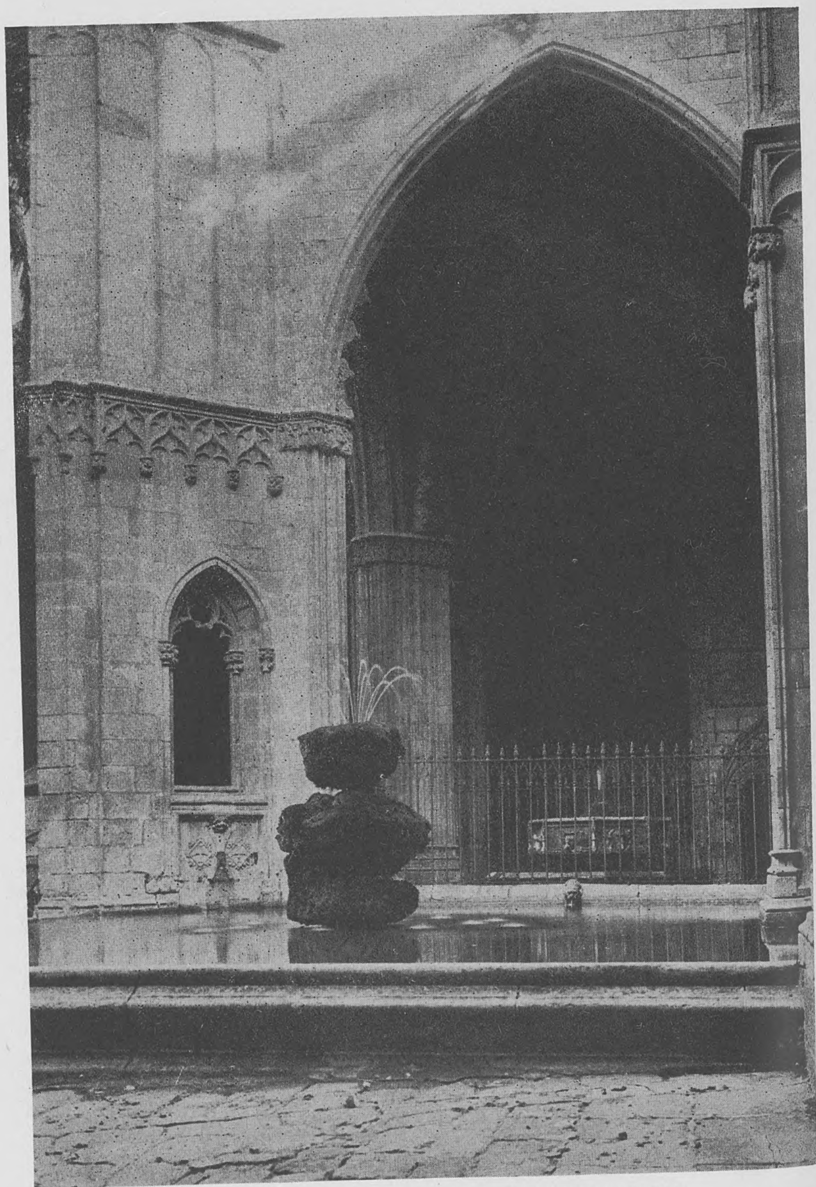
station *fonda*, or a little beyond the monastery at the spa, Espluga de Francoli having been a noted thermal resort ever since Roman days.

It does not need the call of the cloister to take one to Catalonia, that wealthy, turbulent corner of Spain that lies between the white-capped Pyrenees, the blue Mediterranean, the green old kingdom of Valencia and the gray, arid old kingdom of Aragon. Catalonia has other attractions than mediæval cloisters—delicious climate, fine scenery both coastal and inland, Roman remains, picturesque towns, good food, good wines, a superabundance of fruits. Inns? Outside Barcelona with its Ritz, that is another matter, but at least they are better than the average rural inn of Castile. Roads on the contrary, are slightly inferior. As the Catalan would tell you bitterly, "the king never motors here!"

But granted the weakness for the solitary cloister, and without that weakness this book would be neither written nor read, then Catalonia claims us above any other part of Spain. On every side, large and small, Romanesque and Gothic, and always varied, always beautiful. Estañy might have been brought bodily from ancient Syria; San Cugat, reached by an Amalfi-like drive along the cliffs from Barcelona, has a remarkable set of historied capitals depicting the masons at work, and among these the architect himself,



THE VERY BEAUTIFUL CLOISTER OF TARRAGONA
On the road to Poblet



FOUNTAIN IN THE CLOISTER OF BARCELONA CATHEDRAL
Now a public thoroughfare

saved from oblivion by the inscription, "Here is Arnold Catell who constructed this cloister such as it is that it might last forever;" San Benet near Manresa, building at the same time as Silos, is now the walled garden of a private home; Santas Creus and Poblet, heroic ruins, were once the pride of the Cistercian Order in Spain; Lérida, long since turned into a barracks and mutilated accordingly, yet evoked from George Street the praise of being the grandest cloister he had ever seen; the Gerona garth, two centuries older than the cathedral to which it is attached, is a splendid jewel set in the midst of lesser ones like San Pere de Galligans, now the Provincial Museum; Ripoll is well-groomed and conservative, yet adjoins a church whose portal is the most weirdly beautiful and unconservative product in all Christian art; while Tarragona cloister is so lovely that one despairs of capturing its quality either by pen or brush. All these of the Romanesque period await the pilgrim, without even touching on so near an epoch as the Gothic, of which Barcelona has a rarely beautiful example in the very heart of the city. And if one were to leave the mainland and go over to Mallorca a-cloistering, he might be so bewitched as never to return; he might rent a cell in the Carthusian Valldemosa, where the polyandrous Georges Sand nursed the frail Chopin, and spend

his days gazing out over a valley as enchanting as Eden itself.

In Catalonia the monastic institution was sooner on its feet, so to speak, than in Castile. The Counts of Catalonia, helped by the French, pushed the Moors south of the Llobregat River (below Barcelona) by the opening of the ninth century, and thus left a large fine tract free for Christian settlements—that is, for the operations of the Benedictines. As was to be expected from the natural thrift of the old Phoenician, Greek and Roman stock, the Mediterranean trade was soon thriving, and this at a date when the struggling Asturian kings had hardly won a foothold on the southern slopes of the Cantabrian Mountains. The first Catalan monasteries were humble enough, built, often, by the hands of the friars themselves; but increasing wealth enabled the abbots to erect monumental seats and to embellish these with all that the Orient could provide in the way of Christian art.

Alas that to-day these portable negotiable expressions of early piety are gone! But something remains. The venerable fabric itself, stone upon stone as it was laid up in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, defied the spoiler. Poblet, which we are about to visit, is a perfectly stupendous ruin. So is its neighbor Santas Creus. Poblet's splendour is due to its having been the royal pantheon—royal

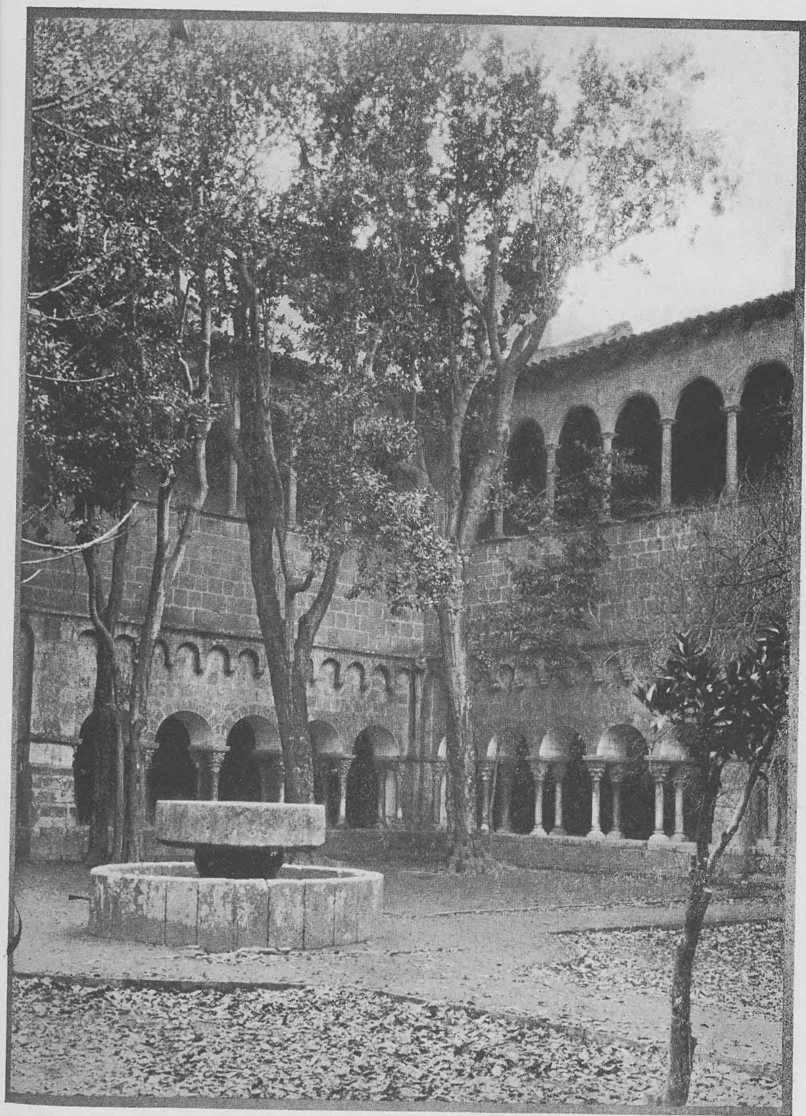
and ducal, as the following bit of Catalan history will show:

In the twelfth century the most powerful of the Catalonian overlords, Ramón Berenguer IV, Count of Barcelona and Provence, married the heiress to the throne of Aragon. Thus their heirs became monarchs of all northeastern Spain and part of France. Of this extensive realm they naturally preferred the pleasant coastlands of Catalonia to the bleak inland Aragonese wastes which gave them their royal title. Projecting their preference even beyond life, they elected the Cistercian Abbey of Poblet as their mausoleum; that is, most of them, for a few willed that they should be interred in Santas Creus. At any rate, one and all deserted the cold resting place of the earlier kings of Aragon—the monastery of San Juan de la Peña in the Pyrenees—and laid them down to their long sleep in the sunny soil of Tarragona. Poblet endured for over six hundred years and was accounted the grandest monastery in all Spain and the richest in all Christendom—*populetum in toto orbe Cristiano nulli secundum.* In the flush of the nineteenth century during the Napoleonic aftermath of Liberalism, infuriated mobs came out from Reus and Barcelona swinging axes and brandishing torches, and wrecked it.

Our own trip to Poblet began at Tarragona on the

sea. After autumnal months in Madrid, Tarragona and the sea could not wait on any other project, even the visit to a grand old Cistercian monastery. "The lofty towers of Spanish Tarragona," wrote the Roman poet Martial who knew the colonial metropolis when it had a million inhabitants. Roman walls and the million inhabitants are no more, but the gray-green stony hills still nourish dusty vineyards and olive groves and pines and aged cypresses aplenty.

Tarragona was long without an adequate inn, a fact ignored by the *Sociedad de Turismo* whose booklet tries to persuade fragile northerners that the Mediterranean Pearl offers a milder winter climate than the French Riviera. Recently, however, the Hotel Paris, which always gave good food, reformed its shabby old self and installed baths and heating. The Fonda de Europa has always been imprecated by foreigners; yet elegant officers and their families, for Tarragona is an important *plaza de armas*, occupy vast bare dingy suites along the front of the Europa and eat the garlicky food. The *mozas* or maids exert themselves no more in the front of the house than in the rear; and the polite landlord and his wife are indifference supreme. Yet those work-shirking servants are the kindest imaginable. The fat good-natured porter teaches the proprietor's little girl to



THE THIRTEENTH-CENTURY CLOISTER OF SAN CUGAT, NEAR BARCELONA
Its every stone is intact



THE CLOISTER OF GERONA SEEN FROM THE CATHEDRAL BELFRY

ride a bicycle; the waiters are forever delighting the smaller children with pick-a-backs up and down stairs; the maids never tire of playing with the baby; all of which does credit to their good hearts—but one is reminded of Sydney Smith's exasperation on hearing that a certain incompetent prime minister was a good husband and father: Smith would have preferred that the premier beat his wife and children, and governed the country better.

Leaving "Spanish Tarragona" for Poblet, one takes the train back to Reus in the early morning, about seven, changes stations in that featureless town (Fortuny the painter was born there), and reaches Espluga de Francoli about eleven-thirty. By crossing the tracks at the station, the shady highroad is quickly reached. Mossy stone crosses that used to mark the boundary of the abbatial domain soon come in sight, and off to the left, the outer wall with the imposing *cimborio* of the church rising high above it. But there is still a good stretch—*un buen cacho*, as they say—before the entrance is reached. Of course this entrance is Baroque—no monastery escaped that—but it invites to an avenue of stately white poplars with a swift coursing brook splashing their trunks.

On turning in here we have entered the outermost of the three concentric precincts of the abbey. Half a mile or so down the poplar avenue stands the second

gate, the *Puerta Dorada*, a triumphal arch built to honor their Catholic Majesties when they came with all their children to visit the lord abbot. Long years after, their great grandson Philip II, passing Holy Week at the abbey, ordered the gilding of the great metal-plated postern gate, since when it has been called by the dazzled peasants who lived in the hamlet, *La Dorada*. It was here that the royal visitors had to alight and proceed afoot across the open plaza to the third and final entrance, the fortified *Puerta Real*. This is the finest of the trio, in itself a veritable mediæval fortress flanked by massive octagonal towers, which those who are enlightened in the history of defensive architecture declare to be pure Persian.

Just outside, the abbot and his cowled retinue, every one an aristocrat of clean blood untinged by Moorish or Jewish admixture, stood waiting to greet the royal pilgrims. The two groups invite contrast—the simple white-frocked that had just filed out, the gorgeously arrayed about to pass in. All these men had been born in the selfsame atmosphere as to tradition; of its own free will each group had chosen its divergent, very divergent course; but each group was subject to a ruler, and one speculates on which was really less trammelled—the group which renounced free will and obeyed the abbot or the group which retained it and obeyed the king. We shall hear later

of the monks summoning their abbot to judgment for introducing pagan art into the great church; but not of Aragonese and Catalan nobles arraigning their king. On the contrary, Ramón Berenguer's father-in-law, King Ramiro the Monk, cut off several dozen obstreperous noble heads up in his capital of Huesca, arranged them in the form of a bell with one dangling down the centre as a clapper, and summoned their kinsmen to see his pretty device. He dryly remarked that although the sound of it was somewhat muffled, he expected his bell to be heard and heeded throughout Aragon—and it was.

From the open plaza between the Puerta Dorada and the Real, one gets a comprehensive view of the entire conventual group—battlemented inner wall strengthened by bastions and towers, Baroque façade which some later-day abbot added to the fine old thirteenth-century church, splendid octagonal lantern which rises up to the blue and seems to diminish the tiled roofs of the innumerable dependencies. The composition is imposing—a genuine walled city, but for the male sex only. We were told later that the wall had a circumference of thirty-four hundred feet and that it was built in 1367 by King Pedro. All the peasants from near and far, even as far as Lérida, had to come and work on it without pay, the king superintending in person. Why this formidable pro-

tection for the friars' home? At that time the Moorish peril was definitely over in these parts; Aragonese monarchs were not harassed like their cousins of Castile by misruled subjects and rebellious nobles; so we may presume that King Peter was not constructing a refuge for himself in case of an uprising; nor do we believe in the reason he gave, that the wall was necessary to guard his bones and those of "the other glorious kings of the house of Aragon." *Ni mucho menos!* ejaculates the old guardian of Poblet. And we too suspect that this formidable wall had no other purpose than to guard the already vast treasure accumulated within the abbey walls. In the end, however, it served neither its real nor its official purpose. It was not against the outer wall that the axe of the revolutionist fell, for no one was attempting to defend it. The work of destruction began inside, leaving King Peter's strong barrier as undefaced to-day as when he looked upon it complete in the year 1367. And as for his glorious bones, the place knows them not.

We have briefly related elsewhere the grievance of the Spanish populace against the monastic orders in general, "the grim wolf that with privy paw daily devours apace;" let us see whether the Catalan Radical party had any special account to settle with the monks of Poblet.

Their history was of course impeccable at the beginning. In the early twelfth century a Christian hermit named Poblet chose the solitude of the Francoli valley which was still in Moorish hands, to the solitude of some other valley a little farther north which had been regained by the Christians. Thrice the infidels seized him to drag him before their king and thrice angels delivered him; seeing which the king in question considered it politic to propitiate Poblet's heavenly champions, and ordered that in future he be left in peace, giving him besides legal title to the fertile valley where he prayed. This document, according to Piferrer, who prepared the volume on Cataluna in the series *Recuerdos y Bellezas de Espana*, was still in the archives of the monastery at the time of the revolution. "I make thee gift of all these mountains and lands," declared his Moorish Majesty; and on the strength of it other holy men joined Poblet and built them a hermitage and planted a garden. By the time that Lérida on the north and Tarragona on the coast were again in Christian hands, the spot had attained such sanctity that Ramón Berenguer IV and his Aragonese queen ordered the construction of three churches and a monastery.

With this event the authentic history of Poblet begins; skeptics there are who reject the hermit story entirely, deriving the name of the place as in the

case of El Paular, from the *pobos* or white poplars that have always abounded there. At any rate certain it is that the great Count of Barcelona and Provence, king-consort of Aragon, being up in the Rousillon, or ultra-pyrenean side of Catalonia, asked Abbot Vidal of Fontfroide, near Narbonne, to send a company of Cistercians to "my Huerta de Poblet, near Tarragona" to build a large monastery. Even with the wealth of a monarch to ease the way the ambitious project was not realized in the twinkling of an eye. The monks appear to have definitely taken possession in 1153, but their quarters were merely provisional. It is generally agreed that the first buildings begun were the three churches—San Estéban, later used as the funeral chapel, Santa Catalina, and Santa Maria; this last grew into something far more pretentious than the original intent and resulted in the magnificent *iglesia mayor*. It, with the adjacent side of the cloister, the lavatory, and the refectory, was probably well under way by the year 1200; the rest of the main cloister, with the chapter-house, library, wine vaults and stores all opening off of it, seem to have been completed in another seventy-five years. To the south side of the church seven chapels were added in 1330, at which time the lantern was also begun. Before 1375 Don Pedro's battlement, *enceinte*, was finished; and soon

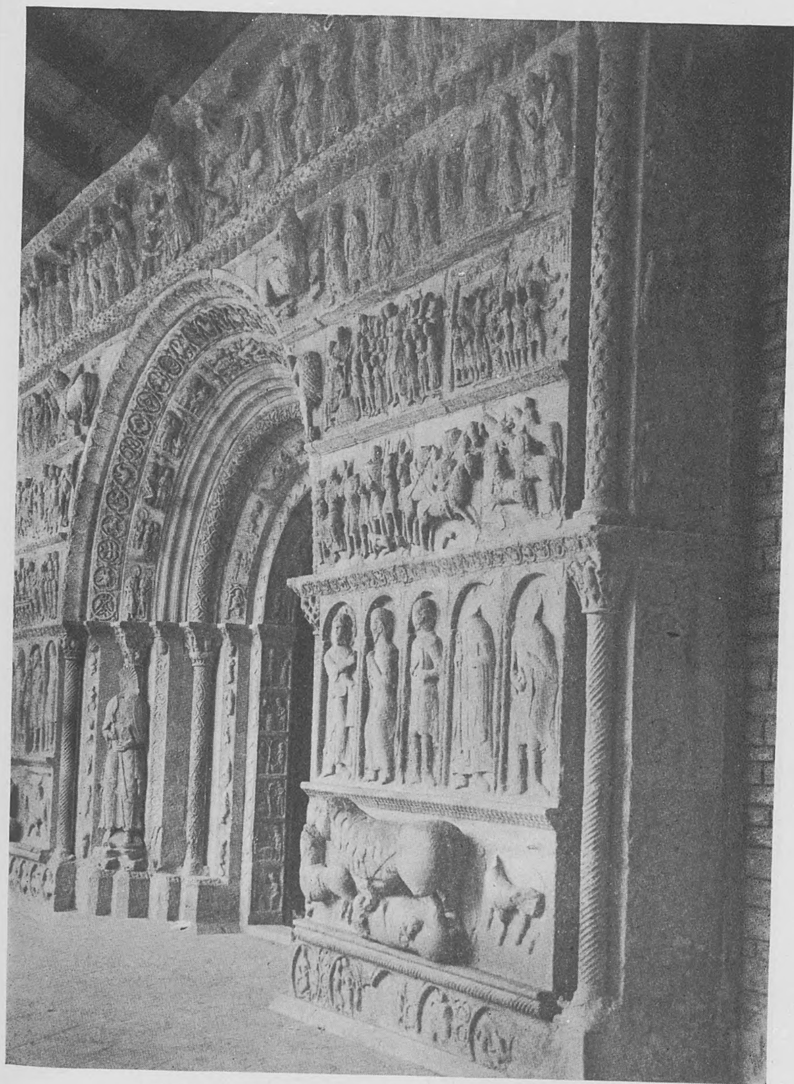
after, the lovely Venetian-Gothic palace of *Don Martin el Humano* was started, using the wine vaults as a basement. Of how sacrilegiously these honest old Romanesque and Gothic structures were overlaid by the gaudy veneer of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries we need not speak, for if any comfort can be derived from the fury and vandalism of 1823 and '35, it is that the wrecking process left naked and unashamed the simple primitive walls and vaults.

With the passing centuries, the character of the inmates of Poblet had changed as much as the outer aspect of their home. The initial austerity of the Cistercian rule had greatly relaxed. No longer could friars in Spain or elsewhere stand comparison with the ideal monk represented in that quaint English work *Ormulum, so called for this that Orm it wrought.* Orm's thirteenth-century monk was "an exceeding pure man and altogether without property except that he should be found in simple meat and raiment;" and he had "a hard and stiff and rough and heavy life to lead, with his heart and desire aye toward Heaven and his Master well to serve." Certainly, in the latter days at least, Orm's ideal type did not abound at Poblet. With kings and courtiers frequently in residence, with only men of aristocratic blood admitted as monks, with princely gifts constantly showered upon the institution, with ever increasing

lands and rents, life at Poblet was on a luxurious scale that would have scandalized either Saint Bernard or Orm. Don Ramón Berenguer's modest Huerta de Poblet, the first donation, had expanded into a domain so vast that the friars could boast that it took a six-hours' walk in any direction to reach the boundary of their holdings. "It is said," explained the old care-taker, "that they used to refuse to shrive a neighbouring landowner until he had willed his estate to the abbey, and who, in that day or this, would dare to die unshriven?"

This popular version is probably an exaggeration; the fact is that the abbey had possessions in every part of Catalonia, including entire towns with their castles willed to it in the beginning by lordly houses like that of Urgel or Cervera, and without any suspicion of threat in the matter. Its privileges, too, extended far beyond the immediate neighbourhood, for it claimed a certain proportion of the fisheries of Ampurias, up near the present French border, and of the rock-salt mined in the curious Montaña de Sal at Cardona, near Manresa.

Besides, Poblet had many branch houses that were a source of income; for as fast as the Aragonese monarchs succeeded in pushing the Moors south, they ceded large tracts to the abbot for colonization and agricultural development. Among such daughters



THE PORTAL OF THE MONASTERY CHURCH AT RIPOLL
The most extraordinary piece of Christian iconography in Spain



THE PUERTA DORADA, OR GOLDEN GATE, OF POBLET

So named by the peasants because the massive wooden doors which once swung under the arch were heavily gilded

were the *Monasterio de Piedra* in the most western point of Aragon, the *Abadia Real* on the island of Mallorca, the Priory of San Vicente, in Valencia. Moreover the abbot of Poblet enjoyed royal favour to such extent that he preceded all other magnates in the parliament of Catalonia, was frequently a deputy general or prime minister, and was, from the time of Pedro IV, royal almoner, in which capacity he accompanied the king at home and abroad, and witnessed great Catalan-Aragonese triumphs like the conquest of Naples. Wielding a far-reaching and almost sovereign power like this, the abbots surely were not forced to menace a dying baron in order to get more land.

The guardian who told the tale lives with his sister up in the second story of the cloister, where he keeps thriving broods of chicklings and turklings; it is plain that he is a most serious person; and I would not like to think he repeated mere idle hearsay about the dead and gone *religiosos*. Another of his tales, and he declares it to be gospel truth and known to everybody, is that the noble-born friars went on strike one day and refused to sing in the *coro* because on the previous evening they had received a quail each for supper instead of the usual brace of partridges (*Un par de perdices por barba*).

"If," concluded the narrator, who being Catalan is of course radical, "the common hardworking

populace of the region took into account that the twelve hundred men who lived back of this battlemented wall were enjoying fine food and beautiful pictures and rare books and works of art which only great wealth could procure, that in addition they held exempt from taxation vast tracts of the most fertile land in the valley, small wonder that the anti-clerical hatred kept smouldering till it burst into flame and made an end of the situation!"

His quail-and-partridge story so whetted our depraved curiosity that we straightway permitted him to sell us a little history of the monastery, which he said was *muy acreditada*, hoping to be regaled by further accounts of monkish revolts; but on opening the book and learning from the title-page that it was prepared by ecclesiastical authorization we closed it disappointed, and turned with chastened thoughts to the further contemplation of Cistercian architecture.

A word as to what it means in the architectural evaluation of a monastery to say that it was erected by early Cistercian builders. We have already seen that the Benedictines of the great French house of Cluny had been, from the late XI century the chief builders in Spain. The French builders grew in skill; their churches and monasteries emerged from early simplicity and became loaded with sculptured orna-

ment, as the remaining Cluniac foundations of southern France and northern Spain attest. Then up rose the Cluny monk Bernard, strong in protest. Joining a new or reformed branch of his Order with Le Cîteaux (Cister) as its centre, he established a house at Clairvaux and made the Order the great social force in Europe. Never during all his life did Bernard cease to fulminate against the architectural excesses he had seen in the mother abbey of Cluny and also in his travels abroad; and soon he was sending from his own monastery of Clairvaux carefully trained white-robed Cistercians to all parts of Europe to build in the unornamented manner he considered appropriate to a house of God-fearing men. These edifices were to be free from frescoes, figure sculpture, and colored glass; their churches were to have a low steeple; all structural arches were to be slightly pointed, the better to resist the thrust of the masonry vaults (a form which ushered in Gothic); in the cloister there was to be a projecting hexagonal lavatory or *templete*. But though he banished ornament the reformer insisted on elegance and taste. The new idea took with Spanish royalty. King García Ramírez of Navarre invited the Cistercians into his realms in 1131, and the other Spanish sovereigns soon followed his example. The thirteenth century saw grand Cistercian monasteries rise,

Poblet, Santa Creus, Vallbona de las Monjas, in Catalonia; Veruela, Oliva, Fitero, in Navarre; Moreruela in León and Las Huelgas in Castile, each with that distinctive refinement that comes of unadorned severity. But the noble simplicity of the first Cistercian enthusiasts could not long prevail. It was all very well for Bernard the Saint to say that images were too close to paganism and must therefore be banished from Christian eyes; the business of kings and great ecclesiastics was to dominate the masses; to this end the Christian faith was a powerful instrument if only it could be made dazzling and sensuous enough to hold them. Now, the people craved images and painted pictures and carved ornament; and while one monastic order could refrain in its own habitation, the masses, so said their rulers, might have what they wanted in parish churches and cathedrals. Neither the iconoclasts of the Eastern church nor later the Cistercians of the Western could check the logical tendency of religious art. Romanesque ripened into Gothic, and this rich new style found a welcome everywhere and supplanted the sober Cistercian; then when rococo ran riot, the monks preferred that to the comparatively sober Gothic. If any of the great monasteries of the order preserved their original unadorned elegance, it is more likely due to poverty than good taste, for

abbots and abbesses had a human longing for "doing over" their homes and hiding the old under the new in proportion to their financial resources. Poblet being the richest of the Spanish Cistercian houses its original sobriety had to suffer accordingly.

What the magnificence of the buildings was before the anti-clerical wrath fell upon them may be read in Volume XIV of Don Antonio Pons' monumental *Viaje de Espana*, published in 1772. Plate, jewels, jewelled vestments, had been amassed to such extent that Pons found a new sacristy or treasury built for them off the south transept. As far back as 1196, before the monastery was completed, Alfonso II set an example of kingly generosity by bequeathing his diadem to the abbot of Poblet. Don Jaime I, The Conqueror, who added Mallorca and Valencia to the Catalan and Aragonese realms, bequeathed his personal plate and jewels; and in the testaments of the noble families of Catalonia occurred many similar legacies. Fernando the Catholic left costly vestments of crimson brocade; his queen Isabel and her ladies presented a whole set embroidered by them during the siege of Granada. All these donations were stored in Abbot Genover's new sacristy; but outside it there was treasure enough besides, both of intrinsic and artistic value. We have said that the abbey was the pantheon for the kings of Aragon.

The royal tombs were gorgeous erections. Each recumbent alabaster figure was painted, the trappings of rank profusely touched up with gold, each gabled canopy above literally buried under heavy gilding. That the more utilitarian furnishings of Poblet were commensurate with its wealth and fame, goes without saying. Even in its period of decadence, when Don Pedro Antonio of Aragon, Viceroy of Naples, gave his library to the friars, the thing was done handsomely down to the last detail. To hold the three thousand and more rare volumes, fine cases of solid ebony were built, and the crystal for their doors was ordered from Venice. Fancy how all this satisfied the instinct for looting and wilful destruction, once the monks had been expelled!

To-day a nakeder ruin would be hard to find. When, tardily, the government declared Poblet a national monument and cleaned it and installed a guardian, all that was left for him to gather up and place on the cloister parapet for exhibition were a few broken tiles with the monastery's monogram *PO*, a jar or two from the pharmacy, bits of blue glass inlay from the fourteenth-century tomb of Doña Juana (where more of it remains *in situ*) and some hacked capitals. What we proceed to examine therefore is the masonry fabric of the builders before the monks moved in; somewhat the worse for wear, it is

true, but still a grand tribute to those who conceived and executed it.

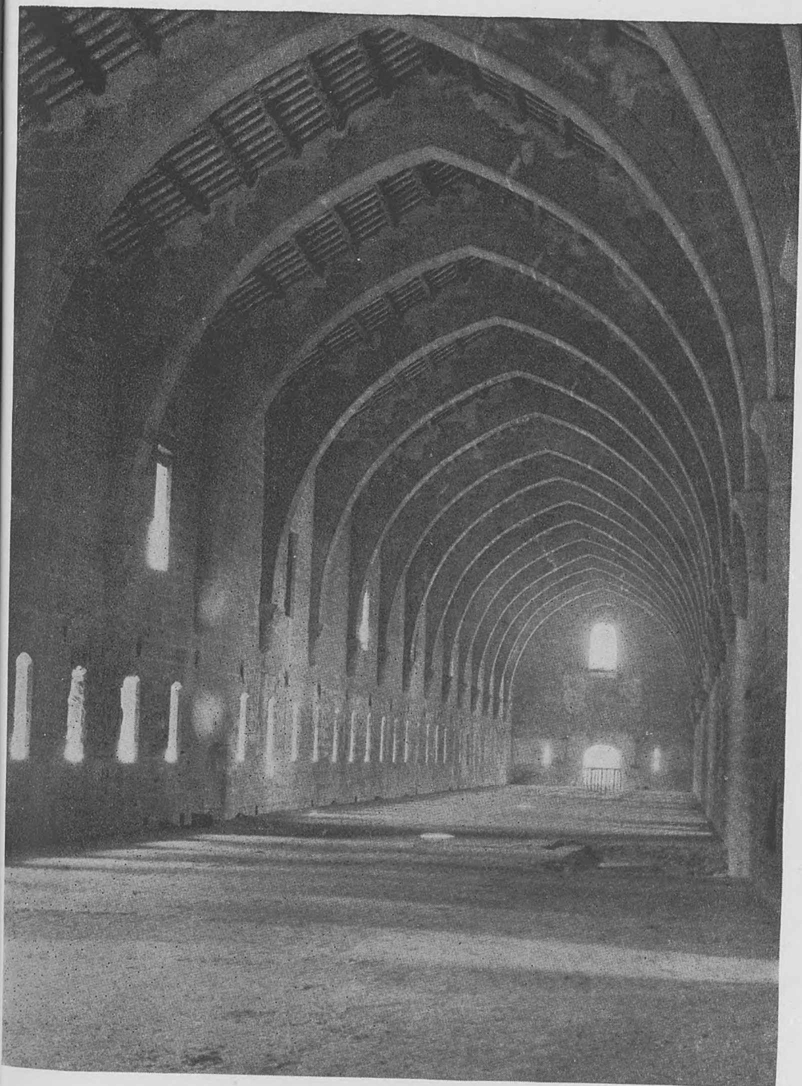
Poblet is laid out on the traditional monastery lines, not deviating much from the noted plan made for St. Gall in Charlemagne's time; that is to say, the cloister is the nucleus, with church, chapter-house, refectory, dormitories, and library grouped around it; beyond the precincts of *clausura* are the abbot's palace, several chapels, royal apartments, and hostelry for guests of lesser rank. About the only departure from the primitive arrangement is that the cloister is here at the north of the church and not at the prescribed south.

And yet how different the architectural impression from say, Silos. Silos, senior by more than a century, seems so much more intimate, so much less scientific. Poblet with its stone-vaulted walks instead of the gayly painted timber lean-to, with its massive rectangular piers instead of friendly little twin colonnettes, its tall pointed arches filled with studied tracery instead of simple low round arches—it all means that cloister structure has here put aside its childishness and has attained the adult stage. It has taken on racial characteristics; it is European. Nowhere is there a vestige of the Romanesque Orient-derived figure-carving; only a few capitals of delicate

basket-weave and geometric interlacings hark back to the Eastern origins of Christian ornament. Nor is there the domestic-looking well nor the more "dressy" *jet d'eau* in the centre of the cloister, their function being transferred to a monumental lavatory projecting into the quadrangle in front of the refectory entrance. An essential feature this, insisted upon by Saint Bernard and seen in all the cloisters of his Order.

What was once a fine garden-scheme within the enclosure is now unkempt, the care-taker being more interested in practical chicken-raising than in horticulture, but the paths and flower-beds can still be made out, and a few rose trees still perfume the air. One looks into the decay of it all, the emptiness of the broad vaulted walks, and tries to picture the imposing processions that have passed around that large abandoned garden. Richly arrayed kings and courtiers, pompous abbots equally important politically, white-cowled friars from the most illustrious families in Catalonia; the two ruling classes each in its own guise going to pray in the stately church on the south, or to debate in the charming chapter-house on the east, or perhaps most often to regale the body with good cheer in the splendid refectory on the north.

The new note for us in this great and dignified cloister is the important hexagonal lavatory, open on all of its arched sides and with a double-tiered basin



THE DORMITORY FOR NOVICES, POBLET

One hundred and seventy-five feet long, its strong walls defied the mob early in the last century



THE LAVATORY AT POBLET OUTSIDE THE REFECTORY ENTRANCE

in the centre. Similar but less important ones may be seen at Santas Creus, not far off, and at Veruela, near Tarazona. In itself the lavatory is a complete Cistercian monument. While designed primarily for the practical function of ablutions before breaking bread, one would like to believe that the austere reformer meant to give back in this form some of the beauty he had banished in the field of sculpture. When the Poblet fountain splashed softly day and night over the basin brim, and the gardner-monk kept the parapet colorful with potted plants, the cloister needed no other embellishment. Saint Bernard defeated his own ends. His conventional Cistercian cloister deserted and abandoned hardly yields in beauty and poetry to the sculpturally more important Benedictine cloister of Silos, inhabited. Over the silent spot hundreds of dark birds keep wheeling about, darting into the yawning windows of the church; nothing else moves; not even the valley breeze seems to dip below the high walls. Perhaps because now over this central point of the whole monastic institution such final and irrevocable abandonment reigns, one gets, by contrast, the keenest impression of the vanished life of the place.

The west walk of the cloister of Poblet is overlooked by the lovely but incomplete palace built for King Martin the Humane. Particularly charming are its

Venetian windows; but Don Martin never lived to look down from them on the cloister whose quiet he hoped to enjoy, and his successors favored Castilian, not Catalan retreats. Now the monks too are gone, and with them that curious ancient Asiatic conventual system to which the North-European mind could never quite accommodate itself, and which the South-European mind has almost outgrown.

The main entrance to the church is blocked up—the Baroque affair of later days—but all the windows are gaping wide, inviting the bats to enter. Long before the deliberate destruction, the monks took out the mediæval colored glass which had found its way there in spite of St. Bernard, to put in the clear white approved by Churriguera and his followers; so far as can be discovered they thought so poorly of the priceless original that they saved not a fragment. How foreign to them were John Milton's aesthetic raptures—"storied windows richly dight casting a dim religious light!" and Milton was a Protestant rebel at that! Except for the mutilated royal tombs and the large alabaster retable the sanctuary retains none of the sensuous accretions which art, good or bad, had bestowed upon it. The tombs, as said, were amongst the most sumptuous funerary examples of Gothic, out of all proportion to the poor shrunken corpses within, and in sharp contrast to the quiet

Cistercian restraint of the nave capitals and window treatment. So, too, was Damian Forment's great Plateresque *retablo* which somehow escaped the despoilers and still masks for a considerable height the semi-circular form of the apse end. The abbot who ordered this work "in the Roman manner," as they then designated the new forms of the Italian Renaissance, brought great trouble down on his head. The monks of the early sixteenth century were of quite another temper from those who condoned the Baroque excesses of the seventeenth; they objected to the imported "pagan style," rose in insurrection, and had their abbot condemned to perpetual confinement for lack of respect for the sanctuary. One might think that Don Pedro Madrazo, writing in the nineteenth century, was speaking for them when he said, in *Monumentos Arquitectónicos de Espana*, that "Italy, land of classic paganism, never understood the spirit of the schools created in the shadow of the cloister, and so gave herself up with exaggerated ardor to the reconstruction of pagan civilization. Spain on the contrary, whether because of the stoic character of the race or because the stern Catholicism for which she had fought so bitterly during seven centuries was ineradicable in her, remained faithful to the teachings of her theologians and moralists, and found pagan art most antipathetic. . . Its cupids,

satyrs, fauns, nude allegorical figures, were inharmonious with the severe national spirit. Not until Charles V's reign did these appear in ornament, which before had been confined to chaste plant forms." We do not know whether the sentence against the offending abbot of Charles V's reign was actually carried out; apparently not, for the *retablo* is still there to prove that he ultimately had his way. It is a beautiful work, and by a gifted sculptor; and with a sufficient number of religious groups to offset the small amount of inharmonious cupids, satyrs, fauns, and other architectonic treatment in the classic style. And yet, I for one, while rejoicing that so much of it escaped, wish it had been removed to the Tarragona or the Barcelona museum, leaving clear the fine old round apse and its five radiating chapels.

And if the church of Poblet contains only the mutilated reredos and royal tombs, the other apartments contain even less—stripped, dismantled to the uttermost trifle that was not an integral part of the very walls themselves. Perhaps the greatest loss to Catalonia, for she is still very rich in art, was the magnificent library which the Viceroy of Naples, Don Pedro of Aragon, presented about 1670. The three thousand seven hundred volumes, containing many gems of early engraving, were uniformly bound in red leather, with the royal arms on each title page.

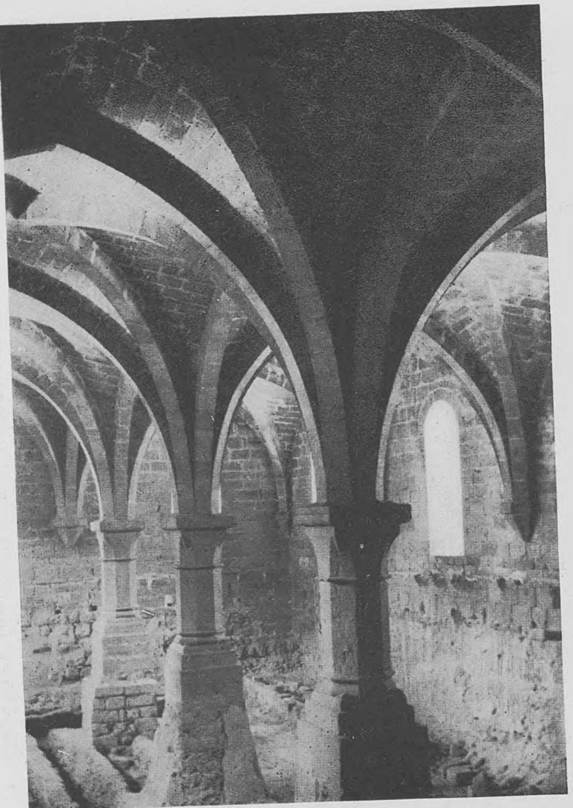
With this much to guide him, the learned bibliophile, Mossén Jaume Bofarull, canon of Tarragona Cathedral and curator of its Episcopal Museum, is trying to trace the dispersed library and compile for it a posthumous, as it were, catalogue. Collectors throughout Catalonia who possess Don Pedro's volumes have, with few exceptions, coöperated by sending, or permitting to be made, facsimiles of the title pages, but the units that got into English hands, and thence into American, are proving a stumbling-block. The canon's inquiries have not been responded to: so that this good "lettered heart" to use Dr. Johnson's expression, who loves books, even those far-scattered books he never saw, and who delights in making catalogues and indexes, is to be thwarted in a purely altruistic undertaking by the unresponsiveness of a few American book-collectors.

Don Pedro's gift represented only a portion of Poblet's literary hoard. Its own library, formed long before, and its own precious manuscripts and early illuminated books, were in themselves of enormous value. As these bore no special mark of identification they could never be traced even were there no end of ardent Bofarulls available for the task. What were not purloined were carried off to the *Archivo Nacional* of Madrid where, it is said by the unforgiving Catalans, they still lie unsorted and uncatalogued.

From the stark naked stone library one wanders on through innumerable other apartments equally denuded—refectory, dormitories, store-houses, chapter-house, wine-presses, infirmary, barber shop or *calefactorio*, bakery, etc.; for the Poblet monastery was a veritable town containing within its own precinct all the offices, habitations, and workshops that would make it unnecessary for its inmates to go beyond the walls. Even in death they remained there, the lay brothers along the south aisle of the church, the nobler-born back of the apse, and the abbots-perpetual under the great slabs of the *sala capitular*, each with his portrait or his heraldic device engraved thereon. The most impressive piece of the great ensemble is, after the church, the novices' dormitory. One hardly likes to summon up the vision of some hundreds of lusty young *frailes* snoring there in concert with not a screen between for modesty's sake, but that picture intrudes for only a moment; the permanent impression is of the hall itself, a noble vista of twenty bays separated by broad stone arches thrown across and succeeding each other in never-ending line. Surely they once upheld a decorated wooden ceiling like the one in the royal chapel of Santa Agueda in Barcelona, for that was the typical Catalan combination with lateral stone arches. The maestro, Bertram Riquier, who made the ceiling for

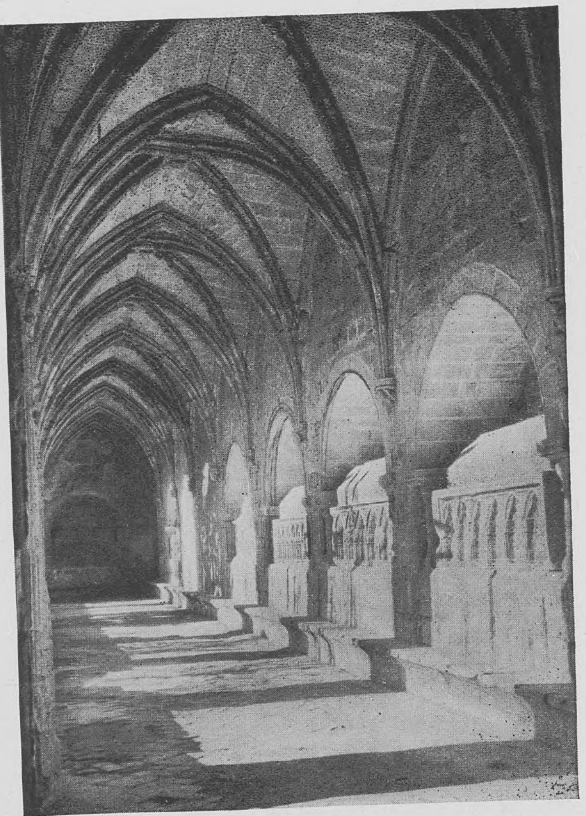


THE FLOOR-TOMBS OF THE ABBOTS IN THE PAVEMENT OF THE CHAPTER-HOUSE, POBLET



THE RUINED WINE VAULTS, POBLET

With stone canals to carry the grape juice from the presses to the vats



THE TOMBS OF THE CATALAN NOBLES, SANTA CREUS

The cloister

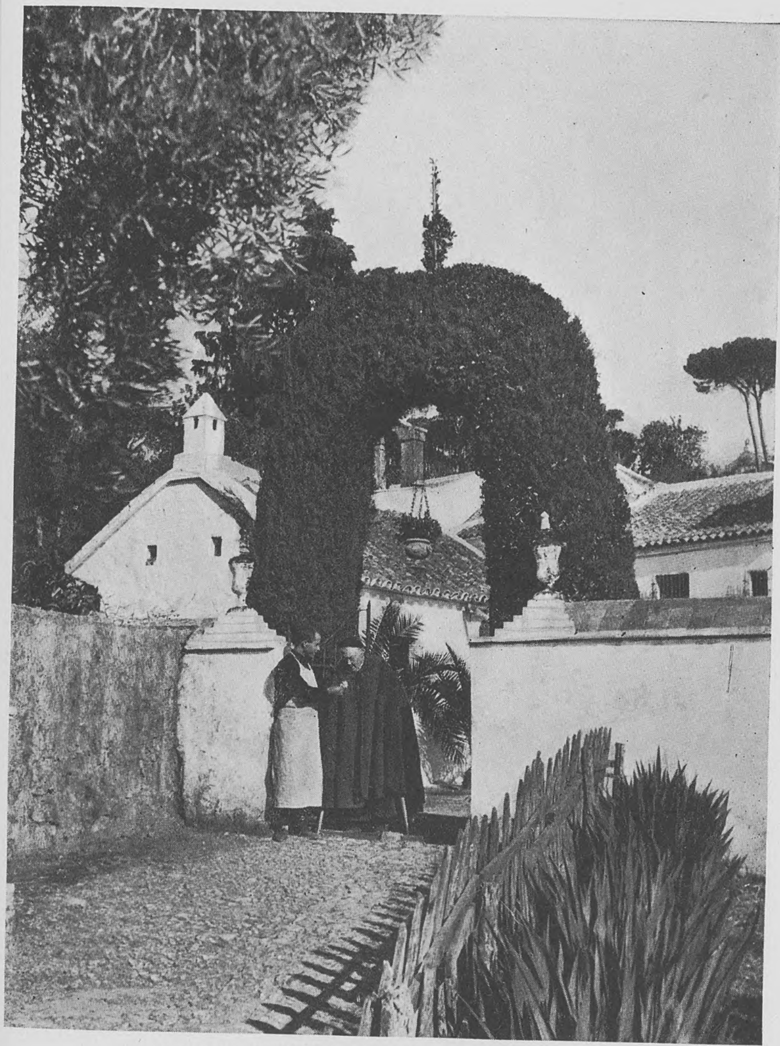
Saint Agatha is known to have erected some royal tombs for Poblet's neighbour, Santas Creus, so why should not the same royal patron have summoned him to work at Poblet? Be this as it may, the first ceiling went, by fire most likely, during the sad days when the incendiary torch flared all too often in the deserted monastery, and at present we see only a strictly utilitarian covering that keeps the rain out but adds nothing to the grandeur of the hall. Indeed, contemplating the dreary solidity of those old, old walls and arches with their new covering, it would seem as if the sole purpose of the great dormitory were to remind man of the superior endurance of insensate stone.

We have said that Don Martin the king never lived to occupy the royal palace overlooking the cloister. With his death (1410) misfortune unremitting settled on his chief realm of Cataluña; for he left no heir, and through the influence of Saint Vincent Ferrer of Valencia, acting for the pope, a Castilian prince, Fernando of Antequera, was nominated to the throne of Aragon. That bleak kingdom, it must be remembered, would not have been worth his or Castile's scheming had it not included the rich coast provinces of Catalonia, Valencia, and the Balearic Isles. These represented the *Côte d'Or* for the arid inland region.

Before the century was out, Fernando I of Aragon's descendant, Fernando II, had married Isabella, heiress of Castile. With the union of the two crowns the latter became the heart of the united kingdom and Catalonia sank into political insignificance. Isabella's passionate love for her own Castile was matched only by her disregard for her husband's domains; yet Catalonia was the goose that laid the golden egg, an ever present help when the royal exchequer was in a bad way.

When the New World was discovered the great queen committed another of her few but very grave blunders. She appears to have thought that the new-born Atlantic trade would soon provide as many golden eggs as the age-old Mediterranean trade had done, and that Catalonia could therefore be snubbed with impunity. Catalans, famous as enterprising seamen, fighters, and traders, were forbidden to explore, colonize, or trade with, the new territory. The one race that possessed preëminently those practical qualities which such a gigantic enterprise needed were ordered to keep aloof, that Castilians might have a free hand.

And how was Poblet affected by the relegating of Aragon and Catalonia into a mere appendage of the Castilian crown? As the Castilian kings dwelt far remote from their Mediterranean regions, and as



LAS ERMITAS (THE HERMITAGES), SIERRA DE CORDOVA
An Andalusian monastery without cloister and cells but with separate little house and garden for each monk
The old monk to whom a lay-brother is offering a flower has lived here over seventy years

they were not descended from the old Catalan and Aragonese stock, the royal abbey had no special significance for them. Its abbots were no longer the counsellors and companions of kings, nor for that matter, was any Castilian abbot, for the power of the monastic orders had waned and great churchmen had replaced the abbots as the power behind the throne; but these churchmen were Castilian, like Cardinals Mendoza and Cisneros. True, Poblet was befriended by various members of the ducal house of Segorbe, one of these being the Don Pedro de Aragon already mentioned; but what Poblet needed was not gifts but an active protector at court. This was lacking; and in the ever widening breach between Catalans and Castilians it is doubtful whether any intercessor could have played the rôle satisfactorily. Socially and politically all Catalan institutions were decaying; so that long before the general reaction set in against the orders, Poblet's power had shrunken to the merely local. The last chapter is too long and agonizing to tell in detail, but here are the main facts. . .

During the bitter early twenties of the nineteenth century, though the nation had hardly caught its breath after the long struggle with the merciless French invaders, it was nevertheless torn by unavoidable civil strife—the great duel between liberalism and conservatism. The clergy, and above all

the monastic orders, stood for an absolute monarchy, the Bourbon system as incarnated in the ignominious Charles III and his no less ignominious son Ferdinand VII. Clergy and crown made, as to-day, a strong combination, and the most the Liberals succeeded in was to force the government to put up the monastery lands for sale. In some cases, and the Francolí region was one, the masses were so far from content with this and so impatient with the slow legislation that they took the next step at once.

Armed bands, called in Catalonia *somatenes*, from the neighbouring villages came and drove out the monks; and being a mob, lawless and destructive as a collectivity, the *somatenes* tarried behind long enough to burn the famous church-organ, the carved choir stalls or *sillería*, many altars, and the granary. Loot, we see, was not their object; they were merely expressing their hatred of an institution that thwarted their aspirations. But later, while the buildings lay abandoned, the depredations began, as was to be expected. The government set no guard round the place, but, as a salve to its conscience, removed the most costly jewels. Objects of less obvious intrinsic value were left for any chance marauder. Even so, it was furnishings of an inflammable nature that most attracted. Thus when the inmates succeeded in returning in 1825, so much had been burnt that the

task of rehabilitation seemed even more hopeless than at Silos after an abandonment of half a century. Nevertheless, the monks, "hope triumphing over experience," set to with willing hands to repair their home, but their tenure was destined to be short. When Fernando VII left the luckless kingdom to his infant daughter in preference to his brother Charles, the clergy with their genius for choosing the wrong side adhered to the latter. Don Carlos promised that under his rule the church should precede the state (for which reason the clergy, especially in Catalonia, is Carlist to this day) and that Liberals should be given short shrift. The Liberals began to express their scorn of the clerical attitude by burning a few convents in Barcelona and Reus; whereat the younger element in Poblet recognized the inevitable and abandoned the cloister. The older monks followed, seeking refuge in whatever neighbouring houses would open to them. Day by day, while awaiting the attack, they made trips back and forth, removing furniture for their practical needs, and giving into the care of sympathizing neighbours the most precious vestments, tapestries, and other art objects whose hiding places had not yet been broken into. For all that, the mob found enormous loot when it came again, not the least of which were the two precious libraries, the heavily gilded tombs to

scrape, the royal corpses to drag forth on the point of the bayonet and strip of their jewels and costly gold-woven burial robes. What was too unwieldy to carry off made exciting bonfires that lit up the soft contour of the Francolí hills all night.

And the pity of it is that no outworn doomed system will ever consent to die gracefully and with dignity. Bent upon living too long, it prefers to die by violence and thus win at least the martyr's crown that the sentimental are ever ready to extend.

When the time came to leave Poblet we were profoundly sad. The catastrophe had been so irrevocable. But as we walked back a wedding party driving to the station showered us with confetti and roused us out of a painful reverie. Here was careless, happy-go-lucky young Spain caring naught for past-and-gone art, and inviting us to be merry. At the station we went and shook hands with the bride, choosing a moment when the groomsman had left off tickling her with a feather and had turned his playful attentions to a bridesmaid. On the platform was a wonderful skinny old Catalan peasant in plum-colored velvet knee-breeches, silver-buckled shoes, and the purple Phrygian cap of the region; toddling up, he too saluted the bride and wished her as many children as his own wife had borne—a round dozen.

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